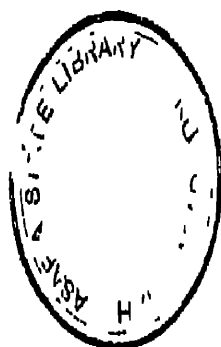




A WALL TO PAINT ON





FRONTISPICE: LONE ROBINSON, *Photograph by Lola Alvarez Bravo*





A  
WALL  
TO  
*Paint*  
ON



IONE ROBINSON

*with illustrations*

1946

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FIRST EDITION

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*To My Daughter*

ANNE



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

IONE ROBINSON, photograph by Lola Alvarez Bravo    *Frontispiece*

	FACING PAGE
PHOTOGRAPH OF IONE ROBINSON by Hamilton Fish Armstrong, CARCASSONE, FRANCE, 1938	22
IONE ROBINSON, BARCELONA, SPAIN, 1938	22
IONE ROBINSON AND DIEGO RIVERA, NATIONAL PALACE, 1929	23
PHOTOGRAPH OF DIEGO RIVERA, NATIONAL PALACE, 1929	88
LUPE MARIN AND IONE ROBINSON IN FRONT OF PORTRAIT OF LUPE, BY DIEGO RIVERA, MEXICO, 1929	88
IONE ROBINSON AND GRISHA ALEXANDROFF	89
IONE ROBINSON, HACIENDA DE TETLEPAYAC, MEXICO, 1931	89
IONE ROBINSON WITH SERGE EISENSTEIN	89
PHOTO OF IONE ROBINSON BY SERGE EISENSTEIN	89
IONE ROBINSON, AGE SIXTEEN	120
AUTHOR'S MOTHER	120
IONE ROBINSON AND HER DAUGHTER ANNE, SUMMER, 1938	121
GROUP OF EIGHT DRAWINGS BY IONE ROBINSON	
	<i>between pages 216 and 217</i>
<i>Watching enemy planes, Barcelona</i>	<i>Concentration Camp, Argelès</i>
<i>After Bombardment</i>	<i>Boy and Girl, Barcelona</i>
<i>In a refugio, Barcelona</i>	<i>In a refugio, Barcelona</i>
<i>In a refugio, Barcelona</i>	<i>Concentration Camp, Argelès</i>
DOCUMENTS USED BY IONE ROBINSON IN CROSSING THE FRONT	<i>on page 224</i>

## PHOTOGRAPHS BY IONE ROBINSON:

*between pages 328 and 329**Little Girl in a refugio at Barcelona**Republican Boy, Barcelona, 1938**Republican Boy with French Soldier in Concentration  
Camp, Argelès**Republican Children Aboard Refugee Ship of S.E.R.E.*FACING  
PAGE

## FOUR PAINTINGS BY IONE ROBINSON; BARCELONA,

1938:

328 and 329

*Child with Bread**Girl with Grass**Young Republican**Young Republican*GENERAL ROJO, CHIEF OF STAFF; GENERAL JOSE MIAJA;  
COMMISSAR GENERAL OSORIO; GENERAL CORDON,  
UNDER-SECRETARY OF WAR

376

IONE ROBINSON WITH MONSIEUR JEAN PUGIBET

377

AT OPENING EXHIBITION OF SPANISH DRAWINGS, UNI-  
VERSITY OF MEXICO:

377

*Left to Right: Jorge Cuesta, Julio Castellanos, Emilio  
Amerio, Carlos Merida, Rodolpho Usigli, Adolphe Best-  
Maugard, Ione Robinson and, second from right, Pablo  
O'Higgins. Others not identified.*

## PHOTOGRAPHS BY IONE ROBINSON:

408 and 409

*Boy from Madrid, Escuela Mexico-España Morelia, Mex-  
ico**Spanish Children, Escuela Mexico-España Morelia, Mex-  
ico**Little Girl on bed in dormitory (note Republican bed  
spreads), Escuela**Orphan, Escuela**Jacket, binding and title page designed by Lester Kohs.*

A WALL TO PAINT ON

*PART ONE*





## CHAPTER I

ALTHOUGH I have always been told that I was born on October 3, 1910, in Portland, Oregon, I have no birth certificate. Perhaps it was the lack of this legal proof of my existence that gave rise to this book. Certainly it was a search for my own identity that sent me scrambling through the mass of papers and letters I had somehow kept in all my wanderings. The early ones, the letters to my mother, were there to help me as a complete record through a series of accidents: the fortuitous and sentimental accident of their preservation by my Mother; the tragic accident of her death along with my older brother's, in a motor smash; the casual accident of my younger brother's sending me a trunk of hers which contained them, intact and in order.

The later letters, to my daughter, were a form of diary, notes on what world events were doing to me as a person and an artist. I now believe that they were written for my own sake as well as hers—once again in search of my own identity, but also in the realization that if I could find it, forged and molded by the inner pressure of my constant desire to be a good painter, and the outer pressure of the extraordinary world forces which have made these strange and tremendous times in which we all live, it would be the finest heritage I could leave her. I hope she will read them when she is sixteen, the age at which this search for myself started, when I first left home and wrote for the first time.

On the Train to Pennsylvania, June 16, 1927

Dear Mother:

We are slowly leaving Los Angeles. Through the train windows I can see the outline of our California hills in the blue light of the evening that I love so much. I know when I look at the stars that they are the same stars that are standing guard over you.

This train is going to be most interesting for me. Women are running here and there in their night clothes, and babies are adding to the general roar of the train. The porter in front of me is making up the berths; it is fascinating to watch him fit the different things together. Now the last of the light is gone and it is dark. I have just opened your lovely gift of poems about our west. Nothing could have pleased me more, and when I am reading your little book I shall have you with me.

The children are making a frightful noise. The porter took my flowers to put them on ice. I have never felt so wide awake. Somehow I cannot convince myself that I am actually leaving California, or that I am really going to study in the Pennsylvania Academy this summer. I try to read the timetable; it's the first I have ever seen and I find it difficult to make out. Just now I tried to walk to the dressing room and nearly made a connection with the floor. I am not train-broken.

Well, dear, keep your fine little head up. Don't get discouraged, for I love you and I'm doing this for us both.

Lovingly,  
IONE

On the Train, June 17, 1927 (Morning)

Mother dear:

I might as well write to you again. We are still in Oakland. I have had my first breakfast on a train; I think sleeping on a train is great. This morning I pinned George's little bouquet on my dress. It's the loveliest thing and I'm having so much pleasure wearing it.

Really, I never thought a train would stop as much as this one. All the babies have spotted me and they amuse themselves pulling my braids. Last night the conductor took my ticket and didn't give it back to me until this morning. I was awfully nervous not having my ticket in my bag. It certainly is difficult walking on a train; I feel as if I'm riding a horse. I want so much to see the engineer, but the conductor tells me it's against the rules.

Please don't mind all these letters—but I do want you to know what is happening to me. I plan always to write you everything that I am doing and thinking so that you will not feel so far away. I hope that I will be able to make this trip possible for you, dearest Mother.

Love,  
IONE

On the Train, June 17, 1927 (Evening)

Dear Mother:

We are in the North of California; leaving Sacramento I caught a glimpse of our State Capitol. The northern part of California is very beautiful, but not so much variety. About one P.M. they cut the train up into sections, and we crossed a great body of water. I was in the observation car. One must walk through dozens of cars to get there. It's a good hike.

We just passed a cow. Lots of trees now. Acres and acres of farms. The country is a design of plant life. We are going through a tunnel. Children are running up and down the train aisle . . . still tunnel . . . a light . . . another light . . . hills, hills, hills, all planted as far as you can see . . . light . . . more light . . . PINE TREES! Mother, I'm so excited—Oh, to get a brush in my hand!

It is now six-ten. We are 6000 feet in the Sierra Madre mountains. The American river is below. The conductor pointed out the trail where the first Forty-Niners crossed; he showed me, too, where they first dug for gold. When I looked up high into these mountains I thought of what a great amount of courage those people had. As far as one's eye can see there is nothing but "silent barriers," completely covered with a heavy growth of pines.

When I think back to Los Angeles it seems a very little dot on the surface of the universe. I wish that you were with me now and could feel the same peace that I feel looking at these mountains. I begin to believe that I take myself too seriously. Riding

through these great mountains, one feels awfully small and seems to see clearly what a small part one plays in this world after all. Nevertheless, my head is full of ambition. I will confess it took an awful lot of courage to set foot on this train yesterday. I'm sixteen years old, traveling alone across our country, and it's like a strange land to me. No one knows me, and I know no one. When I saw the last of "our hills" I was a little bit afraid. There is something one learns to feel secure in—I mean the outline of one's own particular hills.

But I want so to be a painter—and I will go on following the thing that is driving me on, even away from you, dearest. I feel such a loss without you. I try not to be sad. Don't worry about me. Each night I shall send you a prayer.

Lovingly,  
IONE

On the Train, June 18, 1927

My dear little Mother:

This morning when I awoke we were crossing the green farmlands of Nebraska. Great white clouds were falling and tumbling over each other—I have never seen such huge clouds, like a fairy book. A priest is on the train and he has been very kind to me. I've also met a lovely woman who teaches at Columbia University; she has given me her address in case I should ever get to New York. I told her all about my work and how I wanted to learn more about painting than the art schools in California seemed able to teach me. Really, everyone has been so nice that I'll be sorry to leave this train tomorrow in Chicago. It is strange to set the clock ahead all the time, but I like it because I can eat more often. It seemed to me the days were getting longer, but the woman from Columbia University told me that it's the twilight that makes them seem longer.

Looking at these small gray houses of the middle west, one realizes how modern and new the west is. I mean *our* west. Everyone still uses horses here, but the country is also filled with

dilapidated Fords. After seeing all these small towns I cannot imagine what Chester Springs will look like.

Why do people run up huge train bills? I had a fine dinner of coffee, hot graham bread, butter, and potato salad for fifty-five cents, and figure I will easily cross the country on five dollars. I will write again after Chicago. I just saw a horse standing on a front porch. That farmer should lock his front door! Good night, Mother dear.

IONE

P.S.—It was not until I repacked my grip just now that I found your wonderful letter. I'm glad I did not find it before. This country is so barren, with not a sign of a human being, that one feels really alone; and *here* is where I found your message. It was so full of love and kindness, it made me feel that to be like you is my real goal. I want so much to make good for you, so that we may be together soon again, although I love you so much that I'm really always with you in spirit and thought.

IONE

On the Train, June 19, 1927

Mother dear:

I have just left Chicago. It was cold, but I walked about for an hour or more to see the city. It is large and dirty; it seems to me everything in the east has a dark appearance, and the people seem different, too: they look as if they have more money than we westerners. Perhaps it is in the way they dress; at any rate they dress with more care.

I plan to go straight to Chester Springs, as I'm so tired and dirty . . . and hungry. I bought a map to see where I was.

Lovingly,

IONE

Chester Springs, Pa., June 20, 1927

Dearest:

At last I have arrived at the Pennsylvania Academy Summer School. I had a whole day in Philadelphia. The school is a dream, and the country is lovely with flowers. Mr. Miller, the director, sent some of the students in a car to the train to meet me. I could hardly wait to eat dinner (and what a dinner!). I guess my budget made me too hungry! Daniel Garber, one of America's finest landscape painters, came over and sat beside me and told me many things about the east. I seem to be a great curiosity, having come all the way from the west.

I must confess I don't like what work I saw of the students; it is cramped and dead. If that is painting I'll eat my hat. At any rate it ought to be easy for me here. When I went to bed I saw my first fireflies; they made me think of you. Do you remember all you told me of fireflies? Good night, dear.

IONE

P.S.—George Washington is supposed to have slept here.

Chester Springs, July 2, 1927

Mother dear:

I have been working hard all morning as I'm spending all my time trying to paint landscapes. I'm having a hard period to go through, but the food is wonderful here and I seem to eat like a horse. Mother, I am sorry to tell you that this place seems more like a summer resort than a school. Many new students have enrolled but no one works very hard. I'm really disappointed with everything here. It's all right if you have money and want to take a vacation, but you know how hard I saved to come here. I think I'll go to New York next week; the National Academy there is free. Perhaps I can get in and save what little money I have to buy materials.

There is a Russian Count here who is well educated but a little crazy. He thinks I look like a Russian. Everyone here tries

to look like something else and no one ever cuts or combs their hair. I'm getting sick of all this long-haired business. I sleep in a large dormitory and the girls are very silly and stay awake telling stupid stories all night long. I haven't had a decent sleep since I left home.

The Count told me the other day that these Philadelphia Academicians are very cliquey and not considered much by the painters up north. Perhaps he is right: anyway I want to go to New York and see for myself.

Love,  
IONE

Chester Springs, July 25, 1927

Dear Mother:

I cannot find my two smocks in the trunk that has just arrived, and I need them badly. Will you please look carefully for them, and also send on my old paint box as I cannot afford to buy a new one, everything is so expensive here.

I work hard all day out in the fields painting landscapes. I have made a good friend out of a girl with long braids like my own. She is as poor as I am, and I suppose that's why we get along. As far as the rest of the girls go, they are silly and snobbish and speak very queer English. They think my western accent strange, but it sounds more American to me.

Also I have a friend called Jon Corbino. He has a big mustache and a dog that is almost human. I like his work better than anyone else's. It is freer, and with clear color. Perhaps it's the eastern light that makes the general color-tone of everyone's palette so dark. They all pick away with tiny brushes, mixing dirty concoctions of color. Mr. Garber became a little angry with me and said that one should never become set in the materials they used. He thought my brushes were too big, and asked me how on earth I would ever put a highlight in an eye with such a brush. I still have my old drawing board that I use as a palette, and that, too, has caused a lot of comment. It seems that out west



everything is entirely different, although Mr. Vysekal, my teacher at Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles, was not even a westerner; he came from Czechoslovakia.

At any rate I want to see New York for a week end. I have the letter Edward got for me to Mr. Arens, who is the editor of a magazine there called the *New Masses*. (Edward is the poet I met when I was working at the Museum, and he studies singing with Mr. Arens' father.) When I asked Mr. Miller about the magazine, he didn't seem to approve, but it seems no one in Philadelphia likes anything in New York. I have permission to go next week end, provided I stay in the Martha Washington hotel under the eye of the manager, who knows Mrs. Miller.

Lovingly,  
IONE

## CHAPTER II

New York, August 2, 1927



Dear Mother:

I am actually writing this from New York! One of the students drove me up from Chester as far as Jersey City, so my first view of the city was from the ferryboat. And how beautiful it was, just as we westerners always imagined, with the tall buildings rising up out of the water. The first thing that struck me was the sight of streetcars running on tracks high above the streets. The sunlight coming through the tracks made a checkerboard of light in the street, and I walked like Alice-in-Wonderland on the checkerboard from the Battery to the Martha Washington hotel. My room is small and dark, but that does not matter.

The first thing I did was to find the office of Mr. Arens. When I saw him I was a little afraid—he had an enormous black, fuzzy beard. He seemed surprised when I handed him the letter from his father, but after he read it he told me to come home to lunch with him, and he would look at my folder of drawings. Most of the drawings I had with me were the lithograph crayon sketches that I made of the poor people waiting to be interviewed in your office, but I also had some studies of dynamos and other machinery, and some heads of Mexican and Italian workers, the ones who sit around the Plaza near the Old Mission, resting during their lunch hour.

Mr. Arens lives on top of a roof, over what they call Union Square. It seems strange to me, anyone wanting to live on a roof. His wife who was very attractive was kind to me, but I thought she looked a little funny with a boy's haircut. When we came into the apartment she was piling prune boxes together, making what she said would be bookcases. We ate lunch off some very queer plates that Mrs. Arens told me came from Italy. After lunch they both looked at my drawings and seemed very interested, especially in the ones of the workers' heads. The afternoon passed quickly. Several people were invited in for cocktails and

I seemed to be something for them to look at. We all sat out on the roof, in what Mrs. Arens called her garden, but it looked silly to me, especially when I saw cactus planted in flower-boxes (the kind we dig up and try to get rid of). The roof was full of water-pipes and everyone was continually stepping over the pipes. There was a great deal of talk about the marines in Nicaragua and a man called Sandino, who is a guerrilla leader trying to drive the marines out of his country.

Towards evening Mr. Arens took me for a ride up Fifth Avenue. I saw the Metropolitan Museum (only the outside) and then we went up Riverside Drive to Grant's Tomb. I am dead tired, but thrilled with New York.

Love,  
IONE

New York, August 4, 1927

Dear Mother:

So much has happened in the last two days. I have decided I never want to go back to the school. I have met so many interesting people here, and they all agree that the Philadelphia Academicians are no good and out of date. Mr. Arens is going to try to get me a scholarship in the Art Students' League. I feel now that I am really on the right road. Please don't worry.

IONE

New York, August 12, 1927

Dear Mother:

I am still in New York, and it seems that everything was decided for me, whether I liked it or not. You know that carache I had when I left Los Angeles never went away, and the day I had lunch with Mr. and Mrs. Arens I complained of the pain in my head. Mr. Arens is quite deaf, and has suffered all his life from ear trouble, so he seemed to know just what to do. He gave me a card to his doctor, explaining that I had no money, but asking

him to examine my ears. This doctor sent me right away to the Ear Clinic of the New York Eye and Ear Hospital.

When I reached the hospital I had to wait in a long line with many poor people, most of them foreigners. The day was one of the hottest I have ever felt, with a heat that is not like anything we have in the west. After standing for several hours I simply caved in right there, and when I came to, I was being examined in the office of the doctor, who ordered me taken at once to the women's ear ward. All of my clothes were taken away and put in a grey denim bag with a tag bearing my name. Then a nurse gave me a physic and helped me into bed. My ear was running badly, and when the doctor finally came with another doctor to reexamine me, they told me I had a mastoid infection and asked for the name of my parents. You are so far away that I said you were dead, and then they asked for my nearest relative, and as you know there are none. The only thing I could do was to give the name of Mr. Arens, as I don't know anyone else in New York. After taking down his name they put me to sleep.

I felt so ill I didn't care where I was, although it looked terrible from what I could see of the ward. It was like no hospital in California—I mean the size of the ward and the appearance of the patients. They were nearly all foreigners, and making a frightful noise with their groans. I could see the fire escape from the window, and a few iron balconies where women were convalescing. It looked like a prison, with the women all dressed in the same grey denim that the clothes bag was made of.

In the evening, when the shift of nurses was changed, a large woman with hair on her chin was in charge of our ward. She made me get up and walk to the women's toilet, which was a toilet and mop room combined. Whatever medicine they had given me that morning was dynamite. I felt so ill I sat on the floor crying. The nurse shouted at me to get up; her abuse was frightful and I screamed back that I wanted my clothes to go home. This made her more bad-tempered than ever, and when I returned to my bed I cried and cried, and how I wished for you. One could not look to the right or left without seeing some-

one who was either coming out of ether, or being made ready to be wheeled off to the operating room, and those who were in between these stages were groaning, with their heads in bandages. I was terrified, and what little strength I had left went in crying "Let me out of here."

The next morning Mr. and Mrs. Arens came to see me. They were surprised and full of concern at finding me in such condition, and in such a place. But I had to stay in the ward for a week, under observation. The abscess never turned into a mastoid infection after all, but I was so ill with the pain that it might just as well have done so. I kept remembering how you used to sit up with me all night, with these ears, using your Indian remedies of heating big onions until they were piping hot, and then placing them against my ear. But it is well now, so you must not worry because I tell you all these things.

If I were not an artist I think I would have died in that place, but as I grew better I found it full of things to draw. Those of us who were well enough to climb out of bed had to go into a large, dingy dining hall to eat. The table was long and narrow, and when it was set with simple tin plates, with a piece of bread placed beside each one, and surrounded by the women sitting wrapped in their grey denim gowns, it looked like an engraving for a Biblical story.

Poor people eat differently from the rich, in the way they break a piece of bread or grasp a cup of milk. Their movements are filled with a miniature, elemental concentration of life, and in those movements, the shape of their hands, and the look in their eyes while they are eating, one can see and understand everything that is simply man. I believe we all need the same things in order to be human, and I suppose when one doesn't have these first necessities of life, a twisting in oneself sets in. I was glad to see how these poor women were angry when some days the milk would not be quite clean. They grumbled, and I egged them on into fussing with the waitress for clean milk, because it was obvious that the milk was filled with specks of dirt out of carelessness, and that because these people lived such

wretched lives, the maids in the kitchen reasoned they should drink anything.

After mealtimes we were allowed to wander for a little while in the corridor. There was an old piano there, and one patient was always thumping away at some tune that usually upset the other women and set them crying with their aches and pains. The eye patients were also permitted to use this corridor, and after seeing them I decided I would rather have an infected ear than an infected eye.

Anyway, today my clothes were given back to me, and I was glad to get out. Mr. and Mrs. Arens have taken me home with them, and I am resting here. So you see, I couldn't have gone back to Chester Springs anyway. I have spent the day sitting on the roof, not knowing quite what to do. The doctor said that I must be careful of drafts and catching cold, but what I should really do is have my tonsils out. Mrs. Arens thinks I should go to the country for a rest. Love,

IONE

New York, August 14, 1927

Dearest,

I am sorry you are angry with me. Please don't worry. I have a good job until the end of September teaching art to two little boys in the Catskills, in a place called Woodstock. Mrs. Rothchild, the mother of the boys, is a great friend of Mrs. Arens.

I am feeling much better, and nearly forgetting the hospital. Yesterday I had lunch in a wonderful French restaurant called the Brevoort, and later Mr. and Mrs. Arens took me to a Russian restaurant for dinner. Real Russians in real Russian clothes served the food, and we ate meat that was burning hot off long, steel sticks. I met a man called Max Eastman who had just come from Russia, and is married to a nice Russian woman. Mr. Eastman has the whitest hair I have ever seen on a man who is not old. His wife is very small with curly, blond hair, and she laughs all the time that she's speaking.

I have been meeting so many people that seem very famous. I guess I'm in the full swing of world politics. That's all they ever talk about. For the last few days it has been the case of Sacco and Vanzetti. Do you hear about these poor men in California? I met another man with a beard called Rex Stout. He lives on a roof, too. And I met an Italian anarchist, Carlo Tresca. I had always imagined anarchists to be wild, but Mr. Tresca was as gentle and kind as a baby.

Love,  
IONE

Woodstock, August 16, 1927

Dear Mother:

I arrived here late last night with the two children and Mrs. Rothchild. I was a little homesick when I saw the mountains. This morning I gave the children their first lesson in drawing, outdoors under some beautiful pine trees, and later Mrs. R. took me to the village.

Rockwell Kent is here, and so is John Carroll. Do you remember, he got the First Prize in the Pan-American Exhibition at the Museum? I am thrilled to be near so many famous people. Mr. Arens has promised to introduce me to Mr. Kent.

Love,  
IONE

Woodstock, August 20, 1927

Dearest Mother:

I have been painting a large canvas of Mrs. Rothchild, and a smaller one of Zoie, the colored cook. I'm working with so much energy; I'll never regret leaving that dull Academy.

The other day we went up to see Rockwell Kent. He has a very nice polo pony and many children. He does not look like an artist, nor does he dress like one. I mean, what artists I have seen never dress like anybody else. Mr. Kent does, and he does not seem like an artist. I'm to have a criticism once a week from

him, and I hope to do enough work this summer to get a scholarship for the Art Students' League in the fall.

They have a big festival here called the Maverick Festival. I went with Mrs. R. and the children. We all dressed like Hindus. I thought everyone looked a little crazy and wild, and was glad to come home.

Love,  
IONE

New York, September 15, 1927

Mother dear:

I am back in New York and it's really getting cold. The fall is so different in the east. The leaves are turning into bright earth colors. I have a room in Mrs. Rothchild's apartment, and the first thing I did was to look for a job. I'm making some drawings for a children's book, and I have decided that I want to work instead of going to school. I met a Mr. Paul Frankl of the Frankl Galleries who offered me a job selling what he calls "modern furniture."

The other night at a dinner of Mrs. Rothchild's I met her brother, Lawrence Langner, a director in the Theater Guild, and also David Belasco, Theodore Dreiser, and Paul Robeson.

I'm making some woodcuts for Christmas cards, and I use a spoon to print the woodcuts!

Love,  
IONE

New York, September 20, 1927

Dearest:

It is five minutes to eight; in twenty minutes I start to work in the Frankl Galleries. I have been up since six, cooked breakfast, and cleaned my room. I am living downtown now, and across the street is a German Opera. I can hear the whole show for nothing!

I bought a new brown velvet dress to wear: I must make a



success of this job. I think I told you Bobbie and Al live near. He is working as a chemist at the Rockefeller Institute, and they are going to whistle in my window so I can go to work with him in the subway.

Mrs. Rothchild is letting her police dog stay with me; he just came from Paris and cannot understand any English. The paper I'm writing on just came from France, too.

Love,  
IONE

New York, September 27, 1927

Dearest Mother:

I am writing this from the Frankl Galleries. This last week has been a busy one. I have so many things to learn about my new job: sales slips, prices, etc. About the first thing I did was to cut a wood block that Mr. Frankl used on a catalogue for his furniture.

Mr. Frankl is a person I'm a little frightened of. He's inclined to be very sharp and sarcastic with people, although he has never been that way with me. On the contrary, he has endless patience with all the mistakes I am forever making in his store. His gallery of furniture is beautiful. I really feel like Cinderella: the ride in the subway ends so quickly, and one is walking towards Fifth Avenue, and then into this shop filled with the finest glass, smooth leather chairs, and chiffon curtains.

My first day at work was nothing like any day I have ever lived before. I could not concentrate on learning to be a salesgirl. The things I was to sell were things I had never seen before, all having been made in Europe. They are beautiful and strange—but terribly expensive. The only thing we sell that is made in America is Mr. Frankl's furniture, and I have never seen anything like what he makes in America. He has designed book-cases in the form of buildings (this is where Mrs. Arens got her idea) and they're nice to look at but there's no room for the books. I was given a short lecture on modern furniture as a sales

talk preparation, so I could convince the customer how practical these designs are for a modern city apartment (everything is supposed to be what Mr. Frankl calls "functional"). There is a desk (but I don't know how anyone could find space to write on it) made of rosewood, with zebra legs, ivory handles, and ebony trimmings.

In the midst of all this grandeur I have been trying to make out a budget, but I don't see how I can save much this year. I bought a dollar stove on Bleeker Street, where they sell vegetables from pushcarts. You see, there is no heat in my room. I don't want you to get mad when I tell you that the bath is made out of two washtubs, because the only really difficult thing is trying to climb into it.

I have given up painting for the moment, and only work on woodcuts. I want so much to go to Europe next year and then, dearest, I will paint. I have found that one can secure passage third class for ninety dollars. That is cheaper than coming home, which would only be going backwards! Oh, Mother, I want to read and learn so much about the world I live in.

Love,  
IONE

New York, October 1, 1927

Dear:

Mr. Frankl came to see some of my drawings last night. I am sorry I did not open my mail until after he left because the photograph of you is so beautiful. I must tell you that I sold my first paintings to him—a landscape and a still life. He is going to hang them in his gallery. If I ever amount to anything as an artist in this overpowering city of New York, I'll owe a great deal to Paul Frankl, as he was the first person to give me real confidence as a painter by buying my work.

Do you recall Mr. Cheney, the famous silk manufacturer? I am going to make his Christmas card for him, and I am being paid \$150. I must print them all, and as I have no press, it has to

be done with the spoon. It is a lot of work, and the only time to do it is at night. But just think, these cards will go to such important people.

Well, it is nearly eight-thirty and I must leave for work. Mr. Arens is going to take me to buy an oil stove tonight. I made some yellow curtains for the front room.

Lovingly,  
IONE

New York, October 3, 1927

Dearest:

Imaginel Today is my birthday. I'm seventeen! Mrs. Rothchild is giving me a party tonight. Last year I never dreamed I would be so far away from home.

Today we are very busy in the Galleries. I am meeting practically everybody in New York; that is, everyone that is anyone in New York is buying this "skyscraper furniture." Natacha Rambova, the English actresses Beatrice Lillie and Gertrude Lawrence, as well as Marion Davies are all falling for the idea that people sit differently today than they did a hundred years ago. I have been learning how to design this furniture, and how to draw and plan a room to scale, using an inch for a foot.

Mr. Frankl has a class in Interior Decorating as well as furniture-designing, and among the people studying with him I have met a nice woman who recently came from Paris. Her name is Bianca Mendez and her home is in Cuba. Last night I invited her to my apartment for dinner, and after dinner we took a walk along Bleecker Street which, besides the pushcarts I told you about, is full of Italians. I wanted to have my black and white dress dyed all black for work, and the cleaners on this street are cheap enough for me because only poor people live here. I went into a dozen shops to bargain over the price, leaving Mrs. Mendez waiting several doors beyond where I went in! I knew if the cleaner saw such an elegant woman with me he would charge more for my dress. Mrs. Mendez thought this was very

funny. She was amazed at the things I showed her on Bleeker Street. I told her at one doorway to close her eyes, and then I led her down a stairway into the basement of an old building. When I told her to look we were standing in a small Catholic church entirely lighted by candles, with the people kneeling on the stone floor, as there were no chairs on which to sit. When we came out into the street I bought her a roasted sweet potato. New York is like nothing you would ever imagine in our country; one can feel completely foreign without the expense of a ticket to Europe. Even so, I want very much to go to Paris. Mrs. Mendez told me that Paris is the most beautiful city in the world and that the streets are lighted with rose-colored lamps!

Tomorrow night Mr. Frankl starts a series of classes at the Metropolitan Museum, and I am going to help him. It is like waiting for a climax in a play to see the snow. Every day during my lunch hour I walk to the East River and look out across the wonderful bridges. Such a world this is!

Lovingly,

IONE

New York, October 10, 1927

Dearest Mother:

Last night I went to the Metropolitan Museum to help Mr. Frankl with his lecture. I never thought that this would be the way I would get to know the Museum. It was really spooky walking down the long hallways to the room where the lecture was to take place.

All afternoon I had been memorizing what I was supposed to do while Mr. Frankl spoke. My job was to illustrate what he was talking about, with the various fabrics, wallpapers, and colors to be used for a wall. He has a formula for everything, so it is easy to grasp his idea through key phrases such as, "This is a quiet room," or "This is an active room," or "A busy room," etc. You just have to sling together what he has already told you is "quiet" or "active" in the way of color, and then if you ever get

stuck in mixing these things up—I mean if you don't know what third color to add to keep it all together, you throw a piece of chartreuse yellow and that never fails, according to him, to pull things together.

Anyway, people pay to see us doing this and hang on every word. He has them convinced that the furniture of today must bear the earmarks of our age. of industry, science, and machinery, of wires, tubes, steel girders, etc. A Chippendale chair just doesn't stand a chance with Mr. Frankl. I am just as dumb as the people we lecture to, and I find that I am convincing myself that it is comfortable to sit in a modernistic, collapsible, convertible, portable easy chair. Nevertheless, I am learning much about furniture and pottery and materials. I can tell where a dish comes from at a glance.

Love,  
IONE

New York, October 20, 1927

Dearest Mother:

You say you want to come to New York. Please, dear, don't come now, you wouldn't like it at all. The houses are old and people sit on the sidewalks; the children play in the streets. The subway is enough in itself to keep you away, with the crowd pushing as it does. I don't mind these things, but I know you would. Apples are ten cents apiece. If you want to send me anything, you might send me some of these. About where I live in Greenwich Village: it is poor, but the people are respectable and very human. Uptown the houses are all the same and very "cold."

The other day at the Galleries we had a reception for Paul Poiret, the French designer, and I showed him my work. He is very fat. I am going to see the new German boat, the *Columbus*, next Monday. It has the latest in Modern Furniture. I don't think I will ever really like this sort of thing.

Lovingly,  
IONE



*Photograph of Ione Robinson by Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Carcassonne, France, 1938*

*Ione Robinson, Barcelona, Spain, 1938*





*Ione Robinson and Diego Rivera, National Palace, 1929*

*Ione Robinson and Diego Rivera, National Palace, 1929*



New York, October 29, 1927

Dearest Mother:

I want so much to have a birth certificate, just in case I save enough to go to Europe. The other night when I was on the *Columbus* I could have hidden away. You say there is no record of my birth? Why? Please send a letter saying when I was born and that you are my mother.

I took all of my savings and bought a beautiful black coat at Lord and Taylor's, also some black kid gloves. Tonight after work I'm going to buy some shoes.

Love,  
IONE

New York, November 10, 1927

Dear Mother:

Such a funny thing happened to me with my new shoes the other day. Mr. Frankl asked me to decorate the window of the store, and I was very proud as he always does this himself with everyone standing around watching him place each object. But my new shoes were too big for the window! You know what a time I have buying narrow shoes, and in New York they are frightfully expensive. Well, I finally found what you would call "a sensible pair of working shoes"; but they have turned out to be too long and too wide. My feet were so tired when I bought them and they felt so good that I walked away in them, never dreaming I would have to stand in a window, manipulating them in and out among delicate glass objects. Mr. Frankl stood out in front, laughing, but he seemed to be liking what I did.

When I finished he asked me to come up to his office on the third floor. I expected to be fired when he closed the door and told me to sit down in front of him. Instead he confessed to me that he was bored with furniture and really wanted to be a painter. He went to a cabinet and brought out a pile of drawings and asked me what I truthfully thought of them. They were really good, and all of a sudden I felt sorry for Mr. Frankl. It must be terrible to want to be a painter and to do what he's



doing, even though he sells hundreds of tables at ten times their worth.

I spent the rest of the day drawing still lifes with him. Every time someone came to the door he would shout in an angry tone of voice for them to go away. I'm sure I've cooked my goose with the rest of the employees in the store, but he wouldn't let me go back to work, and of course I was doing what I really want to do, which is to draw. After I had made several drawings he looked at them carefully and asked me how I had achieved this or that effect; then he set about figuring how the same thing could be done with the minimum amount of effort, using every conceivable medium *except* a simple pencil.

Friday night Mrs. Mendez invited me to the theater; I borrowed everything I wore from different people in the store. I felt wonderful in an evening dress. We had dinner after the theater, the way they do in Europe, and it made me long again to see Paris.

Lovingly,  
IONE

New York, November 18, 1927

Mother dear:

Mr. Frankl has been taking me to lectures given by an organization called Audac, which he helped to found. It is really a very chic union of decorators, artists, and craftsmen, only they don't fight over wages. One of the lectures was on Modern Photography by a Mr. Steichen, a photographer who makes wonderful pictures. I met him after the lecture, and he told me that he really started as a painter. It seemed logical that a painter could turn into a fine photographer, because in painting one has to learn immediately how to dramatize a few selected points from one's subject matter. What photographs I have seen in the past never interested me except as something by which to remember something else, but looking at Mr. Steichen's photographs, I felt the excitement produced by a real work of art.

There is another member of Audac whom I have met several times with Mr. Frankl, an Austrian architect named Keisler. He's designing a motion picture theater to be like the inside of a camera: that is, when one is sitting in the theater, one is supposed to get the sensation of actually looking into the lens of a camera. Frank Lloyd Wright (who designed that queer house on the hill near Sunset Boulevard) spoke at another of the Audac meetings. Mr. Frankl told me that he (Lloyd Wright) was responsible for the first skyscraper. He is a most interesting person, full of ideas and vitality.

I really think these architects and decorators are more important and alive than the painters I have met so far in New York. Every day that I go to work I learn something new; everyone has an idea about changing or reconstructing things. Even if a lot of what they do is foolish, it makes me feel that we are moving towards a new epoch, at least in the things we use in our everyday life, and in the buildings in which we live.

What I like best about all this is that one can think up anything at all, and really believe that it might turn out to be something wonderful. Mr. Frankl is a very fussy little man, but he is the most daring person I have ever met as far as art goes. He has the most amazing way of making everything look chic, and of making people buy things that frighten them. My greatest enjoyment in the Galleries is watching the faces of the people who come upstairs to the fifth floor, where there is a series of modern rooms on display. Usually the people are in a state of not being able to swallow; then Mr. Frankl comes walking through the rooms with such an air of superiority and such an ability to dramatize things in his peculiar accent, that a lone cactus stuck into a bright yellow pot becomes the last word in "The Decoration of Our Age."

What really fascinates me, though, is Mr. Frankl when he begins to draw or paint. He has invented Twentieth Century pastels, using face powder, real mascara, rouge, and a lipstick in order to make a portrait. I don't see why he doesn't use the juice of a carrot to make a still life! At the moment he is making a

New York Almanac, and I have done most of the illustrations. It's a funny almanac, because it's more like an address and date book.

Love,  
IONE

New York, November 25, 1927

Dearest Mother:

Several times lately I have been asked to mind Mr. Frankl's little boy. His name is Peter, and he is really a brat, who will do nothing he is told. Mrs. Frankl is a tall woman, who is very spoiled, and I think she must have a streak of cruelty to the hungry. The other night I went to dinner in their apartment, which of course is beautifully furnished. The table was set with the finest linen and the latest thing in modern plates. There were five of us—and three lamb chops! I never felt at such a loss for the right thing to do. After all, when you sit down to eat, you're supposed to be hungry.

New York has more queer people; or perhaps something happens to people here. They do things we would never dream of doing out west. They all make so much money they can't find enough ways to spend it, and yet none of them seems to be really happy, or "human," to me. The parties that I have been invited to are so frightening that I have invented an escape. It works well enough so that I can disappear in a few minutes. A little while after I come in I say that I am ill and want to lie down, and so I lie down with all the coats and hats, and then when the noise is at a certain pitch I creep out the front door. I have been nicknamed Flopsy. I don't like it, but it is better than being uncomfortable in conversations that I don't understand, which seem to be mostly about being psychoanalyzed.

Love,  
IONE

Dearest Mother:

New York, December 2, 1927

I have moved uptown from Greenwich Village to a room on 27th Street, so that I will not have the long ride in the subway. It was fun at first, but I cannot endure it. I don't like moving, shut in under the ground.

This room I have found is in an old brownstone house. The owners are two very old people, a man and his wife, who live on the ground floor. When I went to pay my rent I was surprised to find a real live chicken: it was the only thing in the room when I walked in. The chicken was sitting on a table that was covered with a hair mattress in the making, and when it saw me it became frightened and flew across the room, landing in a nest on the mantelpiece. Just then the old lady came in. She looked at the chicken and began talking to it as if it were a cat. Its name is Bessie. I'm beginning not to wonder at anything one might see in New York, but this chicken and the old lady made me feel more like the west.

I have been painting a portrait of Mrs. Mendez. My room is very cold. There is no heat, only the oil stove I brought with me from downtown. You would think that everyone would have electric lights in the biggest city in our country, but in this place there are none. I have to light a gas chandelier, and it makes me feel very very old. I think Mrs. Mendez is really noble to pose for me in this cold room. I am painting her in a striped red and black shirtwaist, and with her straight black hair it is very interesting.

The other day Rockwell Kent called me at the Galleries. He is looking for an assistant to help him cut some wood blocks, and I'm trying to make up my mind whether I should leave the Frankl Galleries. I really think that two months of interior decorating are enough for one who does not want to be an interior decorator, and I certainly don't want to be one. It seems to me that people should be able to fix up their own houses with the things they feel are beautiful and nice to live with; when someone else does it for them it is not really their own home. Be-

sides, anyone can learn to be a correct and fairly good decorator, but a painter is a different matter. Once one really wants to be a painter there is no stopping along the road, unless one is forced to at certain times simply in order to eat, and to buy a few paints. It must be hard for practical people to understand and accept the willingness with which a painter will give up what appear to be necessary things in life in order to steal a few hours in which to paint.

I want to make you understand, Mother, but I can only explain it by saying that when one is painting, the world becomes different. One's eyes are opened—really opened—to the most wonderful things, things that are in front of one every day in the most commonplace and simple objects. If you could ever feel what I'm trying to explain to you, you would know that there is no reason or compensation great enough to make one give up trying to put these things back onto canvas, even though however hard one works, it never comes out quite as beautiful and satisfying as the object that gave the impetus. So it is really the endless chasing of a rainbow that is beautiful and painful to follow.

Today we had our first snow. It was a very light one, like a baby crying. Nevertheless, I was thrilled to see the white flakes coming down out of the sky.

Lovingly,  
IONE

New York, December 10, 1927

Mother dear:

Since I left home I have hardly ever had a real home-cooked dinner. Nevertheless, I am sending you a real home-cooked fruit-cake. I bought it from the woman who cleans the Frankl Galleries. I'm trying so hard not to eat it. I eat it up and make a lemon hard sauce. I only wish I were there to eat it with you.

Lovingly,  
IONE

### CHAPTER III

New York, December 12, 1927

Dearest Mother:

I have decided to go to work for Rockwell Kent. He came to see me at the Galleries and offered me forty dollars a week to be his assistant. He has so many woodcuts to cut, and it is as easy as pie for me to do that. I don't want to be a decorator or a furniture designer, and here is my chance to work as an artist again.

You wanted me to know something practical. Well, I think I do, but I don't want to go on this way. So many nights I have gone home discouraged. I was so tired after working all day in the store, and with washing and ironing on Sundays there was little time to paint.

This afternoon I am to go aboard another liner, the *Ile de France*, to help Mr. Frankl with a lecture. I am determined to sail for Europe in June. If I can save what I make with Mr. Kent it will be easy. If you only knew how I want to see the Louvre, and the Uffizi in Florence. . . .

You cannot imagine what feeling I get from the things I've seen in New York. I would like to sit quietly and paint very simple people. These poor women of New York, and the tired working men, and the children that play in the streets with such red cheeks from the cold: that is what I want to paint. And NOT furniture designs.

Love,  
IONE

New York, December 20, 1927

Dearest:

This is my first day working for Mr. Kent. I had quite a time convincing Mr. Frankl that I should leave. When I told him I wanted to go to Paris he offered me a job over there at the same salary making the rounds of various modern designers and taking notes on what they were doing, also sending him two furniture designs a week. But I am sick of furniture.

Mr. Kent is very strict and his woodcuts are hard to cut, the lines are so fine. I am dead tired. I'm writing this in Child's Restaurant. It's twelve o'clock at night, and I'm eating butter-cakes. I wonder if I can keep this up until June!

I met John Carroll again at the Kents. He has just received a Guggenheim Fellowship and is off to Russia. I still don't see what all of these people see in Russia.

Lovingly,  
IONE

Mother dear: New York, New Year's Day, 1928

I have been working very hard cutting wood blocks. I have to use a magnifying glass. Last week I made a map with many drawings on it for the South Carolina plantation of a Mr. Baruch. It was a hard task, as the original was small and faded, and I had a catastrophe towards the end. It was late at night when I finished working, and as I was putting out the lights I tipped a large glass of turpentine all over the map. I could hear Mr. Kent coming up the stairs, and I knew if he saw what had happened I would probably be fired, so there was nothing to do but lock the door. I didn't let him in until I had hidden the map, but you can't imagine what agony I went through that night. In the morning when I looked at it, the turpentine had dried and left not a trace of a spot. What luck!

A Mr. Armitage from California came to tea the other day. He is head of the Philharmonic concerts, and he collects Kents. I have asked him to go and see you when he gets back. A French girl named Andrée Ruellan was there, too. She is about to leave for Paris, and when I told her how much I wanted to go to Paris, she gave me her address and told me to come to see her there.

I'm going to have a trip to the South in a week or two, as Mrs. Kent is not well. I will be glad of the rest, for I'm exhausted. Mr. Kent is a bit of a Prussian when it comes to making people work.

Love,  
I-----

Kingstree, South Carolina, January 18, 1928

Mother dear:

We arrived yesterday at this beautiful old plantation. It belongs to Mr. Ralph Pulitzer of the *World* newspaper, and I have never seen such luxury. It seems incredible—this great house in the midst of such poverty-stricken Negro huts. I have made many drawings of the people in lithograph crayon. I suppose for any northerner the first impression of the South is a shock.

I have spent a great deal of time on horseback, tacking up No Hunting signs with Mr. Pulitzer's son, and I think we have practically covered South Carolina. Already I am thinking of how glad I'll be to get back to work, for the only thing I'm really interested in is making and saving money to go to Europe.

Lovingly,

IONE

New York, February 10, 1928

Mother dear:

Your letters worry me. Will you ever be reconciled to the fact that I left the Academy? I am really learning so much here, even though it is a great strain and I work long hours. I suppose one could call it a test in discipline: I have had to learn to draw exactly like Mr. Kent and what's more, to copy his handwriting, as I sign most of his work. I don't approve of this; it makes the whole thing like a small factory, especially the work on the book *Candide*. There is to be a special edition, hand-colored, and I must do all of this; one hundred copies, each with one hundred drawings. That makes a thousand for me to do, and I work all day and late into the night under a strong blue light.

Mr. Kent never gets tired; his energy wears everyone out and he is inclined to drive people. I have sent you some copies of his books and the magazine *Creative Art*, of which he is editor. This house is like a three-ring circus, but I don't pay much attention to any particular ring; I simply know that they are going on all the time. He makes a great deal of money, and what I am to get is a drop: but a drop big enough to take me to Europe, I



hope. I don't believe that an artist's work should be like a factory. Mr. Kent has a system for everything, but perhaps he needs it to pay his bills, which are overwhelming for an artist. At the moment he is planning to move to a large farm in the Adirondacks, and the book must be finished before April.

Love,  
 IONE

New York, March 4, 1928

Dearest:

Will this *Candide* ever be finished? I know Voltaire by heart, but I'm beginning to believe that there is no such place as the land of El Dorado, though perhaps I shall end up a Dr. Pangloss. Anyway, I am certainly sick of it all.

Today, on top of everything else, I had to re-stretch some of Rockwell Jr.'s canvases. His father sent him to Ireland last summer to paint: he wants him to be an artist. It's really funny, because you don't want me to be one, and I know that is all I'll ever be, while young Rockwell, I'm afraid, will do something entirely different. At any rate, I was furious at having to unroll a bunch of stinking butter-smearred canvases and re-stretch them, and they are all "little Kents." The butter has been on them a year. You can imagine the smell, but the painting is worse.

Tomorrow I'm going to take time out to hear Toscanini. That ought to make up for this.

Love,  
 IONE

New York, April 1, 1928

Mother dearest:

Mr. Kent decided overnight that he wants to move into his new farm in the mountains. I'm nearly crazy because the book is not finished. I still have nearly three hundred more water colors to do.

Besides that, he has decided that he wants me to help take his

horses up north. There is still snow on the ground, but you know how I love horses, so of course I'll do it, even though it seems crazy.

Love,  
IONE

Ausable Forks, N. Y., April 7, 1928

Dear Mother:

I still feel like a Forty-Niner: we spent nearly four days on horseback. Mr. Kent's horse fell down near Lake Champlain and we had an awful time getting him to a vet. The snow was heavy nearly the whole trip, so that my feet froze in the stirrups, but the worst thing was putting the horses up at night, rubbing them down, etc. I learned something about American history, riding over all the old Revolutionary War terrain, but I doubt that these horses will ever be any good again.

When we finally arrived I simply jumped from a horse to work again, on *Candide*. I am living in a small cabin away from the big house, and it is freezing cold. Mr. Kent likes to freeze—but not I.

Lovingly,  
IONE

Ausable Forks, N. Y., May 10, 1928

Dearest Mother:

I have finally finished *Candide*, and I'm worn out. Mr. Kent is giving me a short vacation to work on my own things for a while. But I am angry with him: he made me burn all of my early paintings, and I believe he even enjoyed seeing them burn. When he suggested it I agreed out of pure spite, just to show him that I could and would make new ones. I feel that I have learned all that I can from him, and I want to leave this job. I certainly don't want to be a second Kent, because I don't think he is a painter. I don't like Rockwell's cold, hard, lines and forms

in his paintings; nevertheless, this same technique in his black and white drawings has power.

Love,  
IONE

Austerlitz, N. Y., June 15, 1928

Dear Mother:

I am writing this from the farm of Edna St. Vincent Millay, where the Eastmans have stopped off for the week end. We are on our way down to Mr. and Mrs. Eastman's house on Croton-on-Hudson, where I'm going to stay for a while. They drove up to get me when I had finished my time with Mr. Kent.

Miss Millay is a wonderful person, and she seems very interested in helping me plan my trip to France. Next week I will go in to New York to arrange for my passage, and I beg of you to send the letter for my passport. It is hard to believe that I have saved a thousand dollars. If I live carefully it will last a year abroad.

Love,  
IONE

Croton, N. Y., July 20, 1928

Dearest Mother:

Thank you for sending the letter about my birth. I still don't understand why there is no record of it, but at least this will do to get a passport, so I will be able to sail in August.

It has been good to relax these last weeks, after all the months of grinding away at *Candide*. Eliena (Mrs. Eastman) has begun to paint and I am urging her along, teaching her whatever technical things I know about painting. She has so much enthusiasm, and such facility in her work, that I am positive she will accomplish something.

Her life has been full of exciting adventure. She comes of a very prominent Russian family, which was active in establishing

the present form of government there. Her brother, Krylenko, is the Attorney General in Soviet Russia. I have often wondered how anyone who has been through so much revolution can be so gay. Nothing seems to have spoiled her humor, or hardened her sympathetic, warm character. She never speaks much of Russia, and when I ask what it is like she just laughs and says, "Russia is just like the middle west of America."

Both Eliena and Max are great friends of Leon Trotsky and they sided with him in the political differences which caused his expulsion from Russia last year. Now they are very worried about what he will do, for it seems that there is no country in the world where he can live. Max has always been involved in liberal political movements, but now he has given up any active part in them. At the moment he is writing a book of poetry that will be published this fall, as well as a biography of Trotsky. He is the most scholarly person I have ever met, and very exact in what he says and thinks. He thinks that many of the young writers of today, who claim that they are trying to invent a new form of expressing themselves, are not sincere, and resort to sloppy, slangy writing because they really won't take the pains to construct good English. He believes that much of the distortion of modern painting is equally insincere.

Mr. John Dewey comes often to see the Eastmans. He looks like such a simple, ordinary person, but there is not a word he says that does not make one realize that he is an extraordinarily brilliant man. He explains the most complicated ideas in such a way that one can grasp the core of his meaning immediately.

Jules Pascin, the French painter, has been spending some time here also. He has painted a fine portrait of Eliena; the colors are all delicate greys, and he has caught exactly the expression of her mouth, ready to laugh when she speaks.

Eliena and I paint most of the morning, stopping in time to fix lunch, and after lunch we swim and play tennis. Max usually criticizes what we have been painting, and he is always rather impressed if one has been able to catch a mood or an expression.

He really loves what is beautiful and is irritated by tricks and the distortion of forms.

I am going to drive north with them in a few weeks. I have decided to take the boat from Canada, as it is much cheaper.

Love,  
LONE

## CHAPTER IV

Montreal, Canada, August 20, 1928

Dear Mother:

I have packed my belongings once again. I reread many of your letters before I tied them together and put them into my old trunk. I shall leave all of these things behind.

The Eastmans drove me all the way to Montreal. It is a beautiful city, which one enters over a long bridge crossing the St. Lawrence. I saw my first saloons and signs advertising whiskies and wines, but the city seems fifteen years behind anything in our country. There are many French signs alongside the English, and I feel as though I were having my first look at Europe here in Canada.

I have arranged for my money to be deposited in the Bankers Trust Company in Paris, and am taking eighty dollars along with me in travelers' checks. The passport clerk in Plattsburg was an awful grouch until he asked for a mark of identification and I told him the only thing I had was a dimple in my cheek under my eye, and that if he could make me laugh he would see it; after that he was in a better humor.

My hair is still long, but I don't wear braids any more. . . .

\* \* \*

On Board S.S. Montrose, September 4, 1928

It has been a long voyage and very cold. My cabin is in the bottom of the ship, shared with four other women. All of the people in Third Class are foreigners.

We eat with the crew, having a long table in their dining room, and after dinner everyone sits on ropes in the very bottom of the ship and watches the dancing. The orchestra is a strange affair, made up of an accordion, a guitar, a mouth organ, and some tin cans. As we passed them in daylight, I saw Labrador,

Newfoundland, and Belle Island where the German fliers landed.

Tomorrow we land, and I hope to be in Paris in the late afternoon.

\* \* \*

Paris, September 6, 1928

I arrived in Paris last night at six P.M. We were taken from the ship in small rowboats, and it is true when I say that we jumped from the sea onto the land. There was no pier. The porters simply threw the bags onto the sand. I was a little afraid when I saw the *Montrose* set out to sea again. For a moment I wanted to cry and run after her. Then suddenly I began to feel like a deaf-mute; the only word I could say was "*Oui*." The train ride was long, and all through the north of France the stations were lined with mutilated beggars, from the War. It frightened me to look at them.

When the train arrived I was very nervous trying to collect my luggage, since I couldn't speak a word to the porters, and they didn't seem very polite. The whole tempo of the station was keyed up beyond anything I have ever seen in New York, where I had always thought people moved with such speed. In the Gare du Nord they move even faster, and they seem full of a nervous irritation; all the noises are shrill and sharp.

I finally reached the street, and gave a taxi driver the slip of paper on which Max had written the address of a hotel. I had not the faintest idea where the hotel was, except that it was in the Latin Quarter and supposed to be very inexpensive. The taxi driver wore a long, grey gown that looked awfully uncomfortable and comical to me, especially with his enormous black mustache. Both the taxi and the driver would have had an "out of order" sign on them in the States. We started across the city with such speed, darting in and out of automobiles and pedestrians at every conceivable angle, that I was completely breathless. I could see

people sitting in the cafés on the sidewalks, eating and drinking, and I thought that everything in this city appeared to be going on right in front of one in the most free and unconventional way; there was no privacy even in the taxi, with no top and the windows wide open. The last of the afternoon sun and the falling leaves made me realize that summer was over, and I would see the autumn pass and winter come in a strange country.

The drive to the hotel was quite long, and as we crossed the city I had no idea of the direction in which I was going, except that I was flying past wonderful palaces towards a section of the city that seemed shabby and falling to pieces. Finally the driver pulled up in front of a small grey building. I didn't know how to pay him, and simply held out a handful of francs, hoping that he would not rob me too much. At the desk there was a woman who spoke enough English to help me do the necessary things. For instance, I had to fill out a card for the police, but this gave me the feeling that I was definitely a part of Paris, even if only as a piece of paper that would lie in some filing case in the Police Department.

When the woman closed the door of the elevator I felt that I was in a wire bird-cage hung on a cord. It was on the outside of the building, so we could look out and everyone could look in at us as we moved upwards to the top floor. She gave me the key to my room and left me alone, and then I didn't know what to do next. I sat on the bed looking at the flowered wallpaper, and at a strange toilet that was sitting in the corner; it didn't seem possible that such a thing could be right in the room with me.

It was too late to look for any of the people to whom I had letters, so I went out to find a place to eat. I chose the first café I saw, picked up the menu, and let my finger fall where it would, hoping that what it fell on would be good to eat. Then I remembered that omelette was a French word, so I spoke that one word to the waitress. She looked at me rather pathetically and answered "*Omm-oh-lett?*" and I said "*Oui*" feeling a great triumph in my ability to speak two words in French. After dinner I went back to bed in the Hotel Jacob, looking first at a



signpost to discover the name of the street on which I was going to sleep. I was too tired even to write to you.

This morning I set out to find Mr. Adolph Dehn (a painter to whom I had a letter of introduction) and I did not have far to go to reach his studio. It was about ten o'clock, and I found Mr. Dehn still asleep, so I waited in the court until he dressed and came out to see me. He has gray hair, and looked so kind and good-natured that I burst out with a rush of words as though I had known him for years. It felt good just to be able to open my mouth again, for I had hardly spoken a word in twenty-four hours. Mr. Dehn took it for granted that I should be in Paris because I wanted to be a painter. I asked him if he knew Andrée Ruellan, and he said her studio is close by, so at once I was not afraid any more. I asked him if he would take me to see her and then to the American Express Company, and we immediately set off to find Andrée. She received me so warmly that I felt very much at home, and her mother laughed heartily when I told them about my first night in Paris. Andrée has invited me to have dinner with her this evening, and to go to her sketching class in the Grande Chaumière.

Mr. Dehn asked me if I would first come and sit with him while he ate breakfast, so we went to the Café Dôme, which is supposed to be the place where all the artists go. I watched him drink coffee out of a glass, which was on a saucer, with the price of the coffee marked on the rim. He ate a crescent-shaped piece of bread with his coffee, and told me that this was all I should ever expect for breakfast in France. I looked around at the people sitting in the Dôme. They looked strange and queer to me, dressed in a very odd assortment of clothing. I actually saw one man dressed like a cowboy; no one seems to mind how they look or if they are clean, not even the women. I felt better when we went away.

We went next to Notre Dame, and you cannot imagine the thrill I felt when I actually saw this beautiful cathedral. I could hardly believe it was there in front of me, and I wanted to cry with joy. Notre Dame and the Louvre are Paris for me. We did

not go into the cathedral, but walked around it and then down the stairs on the river bank to the end of the island that is called the Ile de la Cité. Mr. Dehn told me that on this stretch of land was the real city of Paris; that is, centuries ago this was all that was Paris. He pointed to the Pont Neuf, one of the bridges that crosses the Seine, and told me that the painters of the Eighteenth Century who were not yet recognized by the salons hung their pictures in the little shops on the square to the north of the bridge. Boucher and Chardin were among those not "received by the Academy." It makes one have so much hope to think of such masters first hanging their work on the street. We climbed the stairs back to street level and crossed the bridge, walking towards the Louvre. The size of this great building, crammed full of the most wonderful treasures of art, is enough to make one feel that there is no use painting another picture or carving another statue. I wanted terribly to have a peek inside, but Mr. Dehn said that if we stopped to look at everything this morning we would never arrive at the American Express.

We walked on through the lovely gardens of the Tuileries, and I looked back towards the Louvre and tried to imagine how one would feel and look if time could shift one's life backward to the times of Louis XIV. I wouldn't have liked to be here with Louis XVI. I cannot look at any of these beautiful palaces without feeling elegance and blood running together. It seems right—and not right. I don't know why splendor cannot be, without causing so much misery. We walked under an exquisite, small, rose-colored marble arch with the figure of a woman driving a chariot on top of it, and again I thought of the magnificent entertainments given by Louis XIV in this very square; at the same time I thought of the guillotine. It was this way with everything I saw until we reached the American Express, and I was so tired physically and inside my heart, that I was glad to sit resting on the hard wooden benches until the line of people dwindled away from the mail window and I found your letter waiting for me.

Then Mr. Dehn took me to the flower market alongside the Madeleine and bought me a single sunflower. He said that was

what I should be carrying with a head that is a tangle of yellow hair. I walked down the rue de la Paix carrying the sunflower. The shop windows are filled with the most wonderful things, but I like the other side of Paris best, and I was glad to come home. I slept, really slept, for two hours, and the rest of the afternoon has gone in this letter, so I must go to meet Andrée now.

But think, darling! I have crossed the Atlantic, and am now in Europe! One can go to Germany, Italy, everywhere for almost nothing, train fare is so cheap. You cannot imagine how cheap France is, too. I pay fifteen francs for my room and breakfast; that's sixty cents in American money. Oh, life is wonderful!

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Paris, September 10, 1928

This morning I started out early for the Louvre, wanting first to find the Mona Lisa. I tried not to look at another picture until I had found her, because I have looked at reproductions so many times, almost from the moment I knew I wanted to be a painter. But when I found her hanging in the Grand Gallery, covered with an annoying piece of glass, I was completely let down. The moment I saw the Mona Lisa, her smile seemed really one of ironical laughter—that of a lady who knew she was overrated. Certainly there is nothing so extraordinary in this painting as to make me believe that it is *the* masterpiece of Leonardo da Vinci.

But I was thrilled with Rembrandt's *Christus Te Emmaus*; the rich color fills the canvas like the light that falls from a cathedral window. The Giorgiones made me sad that they were not painted directly on the wall. They were so magnificently grand that the frames only limited their feeling of grandeur. Chardin seemed to me a real painter for everyday people: such simple things as a loaf of bread and a knife are painted with such love and satisfying simplicity of color. There is so much, and I want to tell you all. . . .

When I saw the large landscapes of Poussin I could plainly understand Cézanne. I think Cézanne must have found himself

through Poussin; and after looking at the Davids I could see, in the work of Ingres, how far superior a pupil can be to his teacher. Of the Romantic French painters I liked Fragonard the best. Painting such frivolous-looking women, he was smart enough to let an almost too-facile technique appear strong by not over-drawing a single line. But Boucher and Nattier were probably more successful with their patrons. They outdid the frivolity of their sitters with their smooth, over-sweet manner of painting them.

I'm afraid there isn't time to go on with each painting that impressed me. I spent most of the morning finding the ones that I have seen in reproductions, just to experience the queer sensation of having the real painting turn out to be so entirely different. The only things I saw that looked exactly as I had dreamed were the Wingéd Victory and the Venus de Milo; perhaps it was because they were statues, or that I had them so thoroughly engraved on my mind. It was wonderful the way the Wingéd Victory waited for one, at the top of a long, wide stairway. As I walked towards her the wings seemed to fly: Nike of Samothrace seemed actually alive and moving, and though it wasn't true, the illusion created by climbing the long stairway made it seem true.

The history of the Louvre itself kept diverting my interest from what is in it now. As I walked through each Gallery I could not stop dreaming of the past. I suppose never again will there be such elegance and luxury in the world. No one will ever again have the patience to put so many gimcracks over a single doorway, or on the leg of a table. I think it must have been better to have been an artist then. At least one piece of work could be stretched out over a long period.

When I came out into the sunlight the air was cold in spite of the sun. Every day the chestnut trees are losing more leaves and soon there will be no more to fall. I don't like to realize that summer has gone. I wonder how long the people will be eating out-of-doors in Paris; it was cold enough today for me to go inside the café where I had dinner the other night with Andrée. I drew

what I wanted to eat on the blackboard where they write the menu. I am certainly grateful for that blackboard. Andrée is going to take me to a French teacher tomorrow or the next day. I must learn to speak!

Every night after dinner I work in an evening drawing class with Andrée. There is a young Japanese-American sculptor there named Noguchi. His father is supposed to be the greatest modern poet of Japan. I think we three are the nicest people in the class; the rest are the worst looking students I have seen yet. I am trying to figure out what happens to students as they travel eastwards. The women are the most odd: there are a couple of English girls who look awful in corduroy skirts and flat-heeled shoes.

Paris, September 15, 1928

This noon, quite by chance, I came across the Carrolls. They were having lunch in one of the small cafés near the rue Grande Chaumière where I have been drawing with Andrée. I was terribly glad to see them; you can imagine the thrill of meeting one's friends in a foreign country. They had just driven up from Italy in their old Chevrolet, and Andrée and I listened with envy to their description of Italy. I wanted to set out for there immediately, like a spoiled child not content with the cake it is eating.

The Carrolls invited me to spend the afternoon at Versailles, and I was glad to be taken, as I have not had the nerve to go even so short a distance from Paris alone. The first view I had of the Palace was from the old Chevrolet, bumping along the uneven cobblestone street. Mr. Carroll said the street was very old—it certainly felt that way. We entered the Palace from the Place d'Armes. The buildings were large and ugly, not anything like a Palace from the outside; in fact they looked more like an institution or even an asylum. I felt awfully let down as we walked across the grim stone courtyard, but once inside I simply stood, unable to speak. Never have I seen or imagined such splendor: each gallery, each room, each staircase was a breathtaking piece of beauty, and the terrace overlooking the

gardens with their fountains I loved most of all. We stayed quite late, and as the twilight came I could clearly imagine what Versailles must have been like with Marie Antoinette. Paris is making me live completely in a dream; when someone is not actually talking to me I feel that I have slipped away from all the reality of the present.

Before dinner we stopped off at Mr. Carroll's studio, and he showed me the landscapes he painted in Italy. His figure studies look as if he had been very much influenced by the Italian fresco painters. He asked me to pose for him in the white dress that I had on today; it is very simple, tight at the bodice, with a full skirt. When I said I would, he told me I could make a lithograph on stone of him. I have never drawn on a stone.

At dinner I met several American artists—Leon Kroll and Jerome Blume and another Japanese-American painter, Kuniyoshi, with his American painter wife Katherine Schmidt. Mr. Blume told me about a hotel that he says is better than the one where I am staying, and also about a beautiful village in the south of France where he claims I could live easily on twenty-five dollars a month.

Paris, September 20, 1928

I have moved to the Hotel Julius Caesar on the rue Jacob, but I don't see that it is much better. None of them look clean to me and my room is cold, but then heat in France is only for kings. I suppose I shouldn't complain, especially after the stories that I've heard about the really starving artists all around here. Just looking at some of the people who sit in the cafés is enough to frighten the life out of you. I really believe most of the queerness is affected, but it is beyond me why people should want to affect such distorted appearances. The other day I was made very unhappy and embarrassed by a man who is such a good artist, and whom I knew at the Eastmans'. It was Jules Pascin, who painted the lovely portrait of Eliena, and he sat drinking glass after glass of a horrid green drink called Pernod, yelling at everyone who passed by until his wife persuaded him to go home. There is

another Japanese named Foujita, who walks in his bare feet and wears earrings.

Last night the Carrolls took me to the Cirque d'Hiver, where we saw a famous group of clowns called the Fratellini Brothers. Afterwards we went back to the Café Select and met an American painter named Steuart Davis and his wife, who took us all to a place where they said we would see African sculpture in the flesh, the Bal Nègre. I was so frightened at what I saw that I asked Mrs. Carroll to take me home. Mr. Davis asked me to dance, but it didn't work very well as he was trying to dance like the Negroes, who were as wild as anything I have ever seen. Mrs. Davis was wearing a hat of jet beads that made her head shine in the colored lights, and the Negro women, who come from French Martinique, wore large, bright-colored bandanas tied high on their heads. There were many Spahi troops in their red fezzes, dancing with many French girls. I felt so completely out of place that nothing anyone could say would make me stay at the Bal Nègre. Mr. Davis kept trying to persuade me that this was a wonderful experience, and the way to understand Negro sculpture, but I had had enough, and I finally got home.

I'm afraid I am too young for Europe; it has upset me so. You have no idea what it's like to be alone in a foreign country. People have a different standard of living here which I cannot seem to accept. It is terrible to be so stubborn and unable to take advice, but God Himself could not have told me that I was too young for Europe.

Paris, September 25, 1928

Mr. Carroll has nearly finished my portrait. He is very pleased with it, and I like the lithograph I made of him. It turned out well considering it is my first attempt on the stone. Lithography is a difficult process: you cannot touch your hand to the stone while drawing, and once you make a mark it is there forever. I really feel I have gained and learned much during my stay here. I was very unhappy last week, but I am beginning to love it now. I have been talking to Mr. Carroll about an exhibition when I re-

turn to America, and he seems to think that I should only show water colors and drawings. You see, there is a great danger in making a hit when one is too young: child prodigies never make great artists; they burn themselves out before they can begin to understand life. I have met some of them in New York.

Mrs. Carroll has been buying some lovely dresses to take home, as they are returning to America next week with the Blumes; I hate to see them go. The fall is really here and the city has a grey light when the sun doesn't shine that makes one feel melancholy.

I spent most of the afternoon in the Luxembourg Gardens making drawings of the old women who mind the chairs, and then I spent some time in the old Carmelite Convent near the Gardens, thinking again about the French Revolution. In the evening I went up to the Sacré Coeur and then had dinner in the square on the top of Montmartre. When I had finished eating, I walked down in front of the church and watched the lights come on in the city below; it was very beautiful, and I felt better sitting up there with the simple working people who had come there to rest a while before going to bed. I don't think I'll be an art student in Paris. Even though one keeps away from the riffraff that fills the classes of the Grande Chaumière, one cannot help feeling that it is sitting all around. I don't see how any of those students have the strength to draw, considering the lives they lead in the cafés; nor do I believe that one has to live like that in order to be a real painter.

I have been studying French with a nice old professor who worries a great deal over me, and his wife has offered me a room in their house, which is near the Trocadéro and the Eiffel Tower. It is true that I feel a lot better when I am away from student quarters, but this old professor is so stodgy (he thinks he is an artist, too, and makes awful water colors) that I know if I were to live in his wife's *pension* I would die of boredom in a week. Probably the best thing to do would be to go away to some small village, with a good supply of paint and the wonderful books I have bought, and work by myself.



Paris, September 28, 1928

Yesterday I went out into the country to see the Cathedral of Chartres with the Carrolls. It was wonderful, and completely restored the faith I have that art does not have to be some crazy distortion of life. No one knows who the artists were who worked during the centuries it took to complete this Cathedral. But in each figure there is such emotion, such greatness, that I feel it must have come out of the faith within the person who created it. You should see the face of the angel looking down from the pinnacle of the "New Tower," or the head of Moses, or the figure of Christ teaching. If I should die tomorrow I would feel that all the effort of my life had been fulfilled, since I had been to Chartres, and looked into the faces of these sculptured saints. And the blue of the stained glass is a blue more deep and heavenly than one could ever hope to see again. Why can't men make such things today? I am sure that there must have been a noble, unselfish faith in the hearts of the men who labored on the hard stones of Chartres.

When we came out of the Cathedral I sat on the grass near the river, and tried to make a small sketch in oils. I finally stopped working, and just lay in the grass looking at the two spires. They are so different, one very simple and the other ornate, and yet they belong together, and I can't imagine their being built in any other way.

All of the country around the Cathedral was a battlefield during the War, and if one looks closely one can find the grooves of the trenches in the wheat fields. It makes the War seem very close, and I thought of the time when I was a little girl and the mock battle of Chateau Thierry was held in the big pit at Exposition Park to raise money for Liberty Bonds. Do you remember how frightened I was at the "Germans" in their spiked helmets, and how we cheered the French in their pale blue uniforms when they came over the top with the Americans, and all of a sudden the Kaiser blew up with the rest of the fireworks and the flags of the Allies were flown across the sky in the beaks of

the carrier pigeons? I could see all of this happening today, walking in the field near Chartres; there were just enough real shell holes left.

Mr. and Mrs. Carroll have introduced me to a young newspaper man from New Orleans named Frederick Oeschner, and he has invited me to the Opera to hear *Faust* tomorrow night.

Paris, September 30, 1928

Summer is gone and the city is very grey in the rain. The lamplight shines through the rain on the cobblestones, and there is a heavy mist that makes the sky hang close to the earth. One sees so many old women in Paris; they are made in every conceivable shape, dressed always in black.

Last night I went to my first opera, and I loved just sitting there looking at the people more than listening to the singing. During the intermission we walked to the front of the theater and looked out onto the gay boulevard. The street lights are really a brilliant rose, just as Mrs. Mendez said. I don't know what it is that makes the people seem so gay in Paris; one would think a carnival was on, but it is just Paris at night.

The Carrolls sail for America tomorrow. I will miss them terribly. I have finally decided to go south for the winter, to Cagnes-sur-Mer, near Nice. I have several letters to people in the South of France from the Eastmans—one in particular to Rex Ingram, the motion picture director, who lives at Nice, and is a sculptor as well. All of the Americans I know here are going home, and it makes me feel a little afraid. I begin to love my own country more and more; or is it just that the strain of being a foreigner for the first time is too much for me? Certainly there is something cruel in just being a foreigner, and alone. Never have I felt so helpless and of so little account in the world. But what an understanding and admiration I have for America now! If I never acquire another thing from my thousand dollars, I have acquired that.

## CHAPTER V

Cagnes, October 3, 1928

I am eighteen years old today, and it is also my first day in the South of France. I have never seen such beautiful country, with the rugged French Alps going down to meet the blue, blue sea. The people are sturdy and suntanned, and it all reminds me of my own California with palm and orange and olive trees everywhere. Cagnes is a very ancient town, first settled by the Romans, and it is built high on a hill with crooked little streets running right up the hill, and stone houses. One can see Nice and Monte Carlo, and there is an old Roman wall surrounding the village.

I spent all day looking for a studio, and finally decided on one tonight. It is a great, large room with good north light, in a house that is centuries old, and it is apparently abandoned. It will cost me 100 francs a month, which is about \$4.00 in our money. There are none of our American conveniences here; in fact, I must carry my water in a large tin water-carrier from the fountain near the church. I have only candles for light, and the bed is a primitive affair with a gunny sack stuffed with straw for a mattress. The only means of transportation in the village is a donkey-cart, but I don't mind any of these things in the least. I see only the mountains and the blue sea and the wonderful people. It is the time for harvesting the grapes: the peasants are making the wine, and they stamp on the grapes with their feet in a large skin vat.

To celebrate my birthday I walked high into the mountains, where I could look at snow-covered peaks and then away towards the sea. I thought of my eighteen years of life, and what I was going to do in my work. I had a wonderful thing to think of, because just as I was leaving Paris I had a cable from Max Eastman saying that someone had seen my work in his studio, had admired it, and was sending me \$100 to help me. Think of that, Mother, someone sending me money because they admired my work! You cannot imagine what an encouraging thing that was.

I am filled with such a desire to paint, and I am really happy. Happy! And eighteen years old!

Cagnes, October 10, 1928

I have been working from early morning until late afternoon out in the fields, and I come home so pleasantly tired, feeling the clear sunlight and warm autumn air, and climb the old stairway that leads up to my bird's nest. This house is quite large, with many rooms on the first two floors that have been empty for years. My room is very simple: it has a bed, with legs that go in different directions, three straight chairs, a model stand off which I eat, and a table on which I am writing this, and which I have had to fix with little bricks to steady it. I have bought a little alcohol stove, with one burner to cook on. So you see how very primitive it all is. I must make everything ready to work; there is no mere pushing of a button.

The most wonderful thing about the room is the view. The windows on one side have been taken from an old train carriage. Looking through them out on to the Mediterranean makes one imagine that one is traveling, and that before long one will arrive at still another delightful view. There is a door on the other side of the room that opens out on air and roofs, and from here I can see Italy and the beautiful snow-covered Alps. In the evening they turn fire-red in the setting sun.

I have been lonely, though I try not to think about this. But yesterday a terrible fit of loneliness came over me, perhaps because I cannot speak the language. I walked for hours over the hills, and finally turned back towards the sea. It was sunset when I arrived at the sea. I took off my sandals and lay with my feet just touching the water, looking into the sky at the setting sun. A chill wind came up and I was cold in my cotton dress and bare legs—cold and far from home. I started the long walk back to the village, and stopped at a farmhouse for a drink of water. Looking in through the doorway at the peasants making dinner over an open fire, I felt more alone than ever. I suppose we all

get lonely at times, but I wanted so much to go inside that hut.

However, the important thing is that I am painting each day. I work hard, but am not satisfied with what I do. There is always the fight to make the forms solid and the colors harmonize, and I must learn everything by myself. But I love so much what I see in these simple people, and the earth, that I can bear my own failures at night, when I return home. I often go to draw in the Café Rose after supper. Mlle. Rose owns my house, and she is a fat, pig-eyed woman in a dirty grey dress, with a large string of keys tied around her waist. She actually has a small beard. I find that drawing in the evenings after working all day is a great relaxation. The people in the café are peasants: they drink wine and play cards, and that is what I draw.

Before I left Paris I had my picture taken, because I was soon to be eighteen, and wanted you to see me, at least on paper, when I was eighteen years old. Then you will see I am a little girl still. I am sending you one in this mail—tell me what you think of it.

Cagnes, October 15, 1928

It takes so long for our letters to reach one another: three weeks to be exact, and then only if we are lucky enough to catch a steamer sailing. I wait so eagerly for your letters, and sometimes feel I cannot bear to go on without some word from you. These last days in Cagnes I worked hard; they have been real, disciplined days. A painter must think continually about the light, and on the days that are bright and clear I never stop working until the sun goes down. This is truly a peasant village, and the life of the real village people is a serious business. Most of them till the land, and I meet the same ones each morning on their way to the fields when I'm on my way to paint.

This French breakfast is such a simple affair that I never feel I have had enough, and I wonder how these working people can find strength for the morning on such skimpy fare. I have a small wooden coffee grinder, and I grind my coffee fresh each morn-

ing. It is really pleasant to sit and grind the fresh-smelling coffee beans, and to wait for the water to come to a boil over the charcoal fire.

I know the country around here by heart now, and have set aside certain spots in which I plan to paint. A few days ago I finished a large landscape of the view looking across the valley towards the village of St. Paul. The color is entirely made up of ochre except for the *tierra verte* of the olive trees, and even in this green I have mixed a pale yellow ochre to keep the effect that everything is "coming from the ground." Working out-of-doors, one really feels the terrifying greatness of nature. The moment I dig my easel into the ground, before the first line has been drawn, I feel the inadequacy of all that I have managed to learn. Every day there is a distinct problem, and I begin to feel that painting is not made easier by merely learning a technique. I believe that painting really has to do with one's soul growing in oneself, learning to feel and understand the passion of life that is in all natural and human things. I think one has to be good in order to grow in oneself; I don't believe evil people ever develop "eyes for the life."

There is a little girl in the village whom I have used as a model several times: she is only thirteen, and has a beautiful voice. After she had posed for me several times I found that she was a thoroughly bad child. I would be ashamed to tell you some of the things she bragged of doing, but it made me angry to think that she had been spoiled by some of the "Bohemian artists" who live around here, and I was sad for that beautiful voice that will surely end shouting sordid profanities. It seems to me that she has been forever stunted as a person, unless a miracle should happen in her life, taking her away from the dreadful things she has learned. I painted her sitting on the edge of a chair, her dark hair hanging in an unkempt mass, accentuating the pallor of her face. I tried to catch the expression of an old crone that was already beginning to show on her childish, thirteen-year-old face. One morning I heard her yelling for me from the street below, and when I put my head out the window

I felt a shower of pebbles strike my face. She laughed a shrill, flute-like laugh and threw larger rocks, smashing all the glass in my window, then ran like a demon down the hill.

Yes, there is another side to this peaceful peasant village. There are plenty of grownup horrors in Cagnes, in the colony of *étrangères*, most of them American or English. One quite elderly American lady, Mrs. Thompson, lives in a beautiful house with a garden, on the side of the village that faces the mountains. Her husband is very old, and they have a great deal of money. I met her quite by chance one day in the post office, and she invited me to come to her studio for tea. Everything about her place was so lovely that I felt my poor room would not even be fit for the stable in which she kept her donkey-cart. She showed me all of her paintings, which were very well done, and I marvelled at the quantity she had done in the few months she had lived in Cagnes.

There were a number of other people there for tea. One was a writer from Boston, who is writing a novel in a new language he has invented. He mixes words together, making one long word that sounds at first like something you have never heard, but when you repeat it you realize that it is just a number of small, ordinary words thrown together! Then there was a Dutch painter who actually told me he was greater than Van Gogh, and an English newspaperman who seemed very nice. Another Englishman, a novelist who wore a white corduroy suit and a long black cape, gave Mrs. Thompson a copy of his latest book, *Eskimo of Montparnasse*. The only guest who meant anything at all to me was Boris Grigoriev, the Russian painter. Tea was only a starter for everyone, and after several hours of cocktails no one made any more sense except Mrs. Thompson, who got very tipsy and sat in the middle of the room telling the story of her son, a flier who had been killed in the War. And then I understood why she was so emotional. On the way home I firmly decided to stay away from the so-called intellectuals of Cagnes.

I don't know if Europe spoils Americans and makes them go

crazy, or if something we already have in us gets loose in Europe. Certainly I never saw so many strange goings-on; New York is nothing compared to this. For instance, the other night I saw the English writer (whom I now call the Eskimo of Montparnasse) leaning against the wall of a house, sound asleep. He had a lighted candle in his hand, and he must have been asleep a long time, because the tallow from the candle had dripped all over his hand, until the hand was fixed in wax, tight to the candle-holder. From a distance I had thought he must be ill, but when I came close and saw he was asleep standing up, I was afraid. I blew out the candle without waking him, and ran home and bolted my door.

Cagnes, October 21, 1928

I begin to look only for the mailman, and I think he begins to look for me if he has a letter from America. Yesterday when I received yours, that I had been waiting for for so long, I sat down and cried. Really, I am lonely, and I confess that this poverty makes one worn out. It is the continual preparing and working for everything that one must do that makes it so hard. Just the chore of carrying water is enough to exhaust one.

I went to Nice the other day for a bath in the public bathhouse. After the bath I treated myself to a shampoo, and I felt so homesick I leaned my head against the little Frenchwoman, pretending that I was asleep, and trying to pretend that she was you.

Still, there is the accomplishment in my work to make up for this. I'm improving every day, and I find France a very sympathetic place to work. I like it for that. I hear they have dreadful weather here in winter, rain that lasts for weeks at a time, and I think it is coming, for today it is very chilly.

I wear your red dress often; it is my best, and I think I look well in it with my long, yellow hair. Do you think I should cut my hair?



Cagnes, November 10, 1928

Today it rained all day long, and this room is the saddest place I have ever seen. My fireplace is big enough to stand in, which will give you an idea of how much water can come down the chimney when it rains. What didn't come down the chimney leaked through the roof, and as the floor is very uneven, it just stays in little pools all over the room.

I have painted three very good pictures, one a portrait of a little boy dressed in a black smock (all the French children wear smocks over their clothes) with a black beret on his head, black stockings, and a pair of wonderfully yellow wooden shoes. His face is so rosy and full of mischief that I made the background a warm grey, because all of those grey and black tones make the color of his face seem more brilliant than it actually is. Then I have quite a large canvas of an old woman, tying a bundle of twigs together. Most of the old people and the children spend the whole day gathering twigs for firewood. In America we would never have the patience to do such a thing, but people here are so poor they hunt for anything they can burn. The third painting is a still life of my coffee grinder, an old green wine bottle, and several green apples. But I'm afraid this room is becoming too unhealthy to stay in all day long, now that the weather is too cold to work out of doors.

Andrée gave me a letter to a Russian woman, Marishka Dietrich, whose ex-husband is a well-known American sculptor. She has been very kind to me, and has offered me the use of Mr. Dietrich's studio. He lives in Germany now, as he is married again to a German noblewoman who inherited a castle in Nuremburg. I have been going to Mrs. Dietrich's house for dinner lately, as I became ill after eating some horse meat that was too old. Everyone eats horse meat in France, but I'm sure that because I cannot speak well enough, the butcher just gave me the worst piece he had. Anyway, it made me very sick, and I have decided I will never eat any more horse, although I do like snails and fishes' heads! Also I'm studying French again, from

five to seven every day. My teacher is the proprietor of the big café, and I give him English in return.

When it is clear weather again I'm going to take the bus to Antibes. Max Eastman gave me a letter to a very rich English friend there, and Miss Millay gave me a letter to her brother-in-law, who lives there too. One can take wonderful rides on buses all along the coast. I have not been to Monte Carlo yet but I plan to go one day soon, although I have been putting it off because I don't know what I would do in Monte Carlo. All the things that I would like to look at, such as the big gambling casinos, I am not allowed to enter because I am too young. Monte Carlo has always been the most wicked city in the world to me, and I can see it very plainly from my window, as the coastline juts out into the sea. I am always daring myself to go, but so far I haven't had the nerve. I did take a long bus ride to Grasse, where they make perfume. It was beautiful seeing hundreds and hundreds of roses growing on the terraced mountain, and their fragrance was better than any bottle of perfume.

Cagnes, November 23, 1928

There are so many things I would like to write you that I find myself writing letters every night which end in the fire. The whole Cote d'Azur is like the North Pole, with snow everywhere, and these palm and orange trees looking as out of place as they would in Alaska. Never have I spent such a winter, and never will I forget this one. It is impossible to put into words all that I am experiencing and the conclusions I am beginning to form about things. Besides, it gets me too excited, and since all the Robinsons have a flair for exaggeration I guess I had better wait until I come home.

The other day I took the bus to Antibes to visit the Eastmans' friends. I have never seen such a beautiful house; it was like a white castle on the edge of the sea. I hadn't let them know I was coming, and they were having some sort of a musical entertainment. I made a funny guest in my bare legs, especially as nearly

everyone there was an English Lord or Lady. The host was a kind-looking little man in a wheelchair, and he looked so sick and white that I wondered how he could find the strength to greet so many guests. He was evidently much interested in the letter that I gave him (it was sealed, so I don't know what Max had written) and he talked about my work and seemed concerned that I was living alone in Cagnes. Then he rang a bell, telling the butler to bring me a glass of champagne and some sandwiches, and asked me if I would like to look at his library. He took me there, and then the nurse wheeled him away and I was left alone in an enormous room full of books, with a glass of champagne and a watercress sandwich. I wondered how Max, who is a Socialist, got to know such an aristocrat so well.

After I had been alone in the library for some time, a young Englishman opened the door and told me that Mr. Davidson had gone to bed, but had sent a message that I might borrow any books I wanted from the library. Everything had been so strange that afternoon that I did not hesitate to select an armful of beautifully bound red leather books on art. The Englishman looked at what I had and said, "Why don't you take something to read?" So I took three volumes of Dostoevski, wanting to know what Russia was all about. When he saw these, the Englishman shook his head and laughed, and we went into the salon, where I met dozens of people. It made me feel very shy and I wanted to leave, so I used the other letter in my pocket as an excuse, the one to Miss Millay's brother-in-law. The young Englishman drove me to the Boissevains' house in Antibes, which was quite far. They were just leaving for Cannes and asked me to come along, so before I knew it I was in Cannes, waiting in the street with Mr. Boissevain while his wife went into Chanel's for a fitting. I hardly knew what to say, but Mr. Boissevain talked about Miss Millay's poetry, and then painting, and then the Eastmans and Russia while we waited in the car. When his wife came out they drove me back to Cagnes, and I thought it better to get out at the foot of the hill and walk home.

It started to rain hard again when I got inside my room, so I

cooked dinner and went to bed early with *The Brothers Karamazov*. Did you ever read this?

I guess I must try to write what I am thinking, after all, for it worries me. If you were here and I could talk with you, I would ask, "How does one make life? From dreams that are inside one? Or from what one sees that is successful?" You see, what I saw at Antibes impressed me very much, and it has made me think. I suppose if I go along like this I will always be very poor. And I know that learning to paint and be an artist brings one in contact with only a very limited part of life. The healthiest part of an artist's life comes from the subjects he paints and the work he does on those subjects. As for the people he meets, the students and older painters, they all seem to be caught in an unhealthy way of life. By chance, through a letter, I have seen successful people, people who take it for granted that an artist is something strange and queer. When I realize the difference between their friends and surroundings, and the people and things one accumulates around one by wanting to be a painter, I can see that it is logical for them to think that artists are queer.

But then, I suppose, what really makes the difference is money, not just wanting to be an artist. I have these few hundred dollars saved up which it hurts me to spend, so I try to live on as little as I can. I don't mind how poor the things are that I have, because with them I have real freedom to work and study this year. What I do mind is the kind of life artists seem to have to lead: their artistic poverty is somehow false and different from the simple, healthy poverty of the peasants. When I was in school I liked all of the same things as the other girls in my class, but now that I have decided to be a painter I never meet other painters who like to do the simple things I like. The only artistic person in Cagnes who shows any enthusiasm for real fun is an Irish writer named Liam O'Flaherty, and even he drinks too much. He took me to the horse races in Nice, but at the races he started to drink and ended up not being able to see the horses. His wife was crying all the time, and their small daughter stood watching the races with me.

Please, when you write to me, tell me what is happening in America.

Cagnes, December 12, 1928

There is a new moon in the sky tonight, and directly above it a star, but it is bitterly cold. I have moved into two small rooms because I could not stand the cold in my bird's nest. One I use to cook, eat, and work in, and although the light is very bad, at least I can keep it quite warm. The other is like the North Pole and I just run and jump into bed. When I get too frozen I go into Nice and take a Turkish bath. They certainly are wonderful and I spend the whole afternoon there, staying until the last bus back to Cagnes.

On one of my trips to Nice I went to see Rex Ingram with Max Eastman's letter, and he was very nice to me. Yesterday he asked me to work on the set, as he was shooting a scene that needed an English-looking girl. I agreed to be the extra, for this was my first experience in the movies. It was freezing cold on the set; the only way we could keep warm was to hug close to the fires built in large tin cans. I had only one thing to do and I seemed to go on doing it forever. I had to walk onto the set, which was a hotel lobby, go to the desk, and speak to the clerk, and I got so tired I wished he were a real clerk and the set a real hotel so I could say good night to everyone. Alice Terry, Mr. Ingram's wife, is the star of the picture, and she is very beautiful but getting a little fat. When we had finished she invited me to dinner in their apartment in Nice, where I had my first real American food and even read some of her old Los Angeles papers, but nothing much seems to be happening in America. I have never met a movie star before, but Alice Terry didn't seem like one to me because I was so glad just to meet someone from California. Mr. Ingram showed me his sculpture: he has done dozens of heads of young Arabs. He is mad about Africa, and I have even heard that he became a Mohammedan. I think it is a shame that a man with so much talent as a director (do you re-

member his *Four Horsemen*?) should be wasting his time on the junk he is producing here.

Some of our battleships are in the harbor at Villefranche and the streets of Nice were filled with American sailors. They looked clean and strong next to the French sailors, who look like girls to me and make me feel that the French navy must be a silly affair. It was good to see all those fresh American faces, and I thought again what a wonderful country America is.

Climbing the hill to the rue de l'Eglise I saw the first signs of Christmas: a little candy Santa Claus and a pair of wooden shoes with candy in them, in the grocery store. The peasants who have the grocery store are my best friends and I go often to their house for dinner. It is always funny because I speak French so badly I have to go through a great show to express my meaning. But they are good friends: they give me food and I give them knickknacks from America. I would like some things from America myself: for Christmas I wish for an American bathroom (complete!) a cup of American coffee, and a piece of toast!

Cagnes, December 21, 1928

When you receive this Christmas will be over. In this poor village, by the sign of things, it will pass like any other day. Really, the poverty of these peasants is appalling. It is cold and rainy today and the dull grey light seems to add to one's loneliness.

I spent the whole morning stuffing the fire with twigs and bad wood that doesn't burn well, waiting for a little boy who was going to pose for me. He hasn't shown up yet, but these peasants are very difficult: they are shy and afraid of the crazy artists here (I don't blame them). With this everlasting cold it is impossible to work out-of-doors any more, and the days I don't paint I read. I have half a mind to go to Italy if this weather keeps up; at least there I can feast my eyes on all of the great Italian painting. Sometimes I believe a painter learns more by simply looking at the great masters, but of course there are no

rules for art. I have found I paint better after periods of inactivity, although sometimes it works the other way round. The fact is that even though I am not working with a brush in my hand my eyes are always working on what I see in front of me.

Please forgive me for sending no Christmas presents. I know you understand why my money means so much to me. I send all my love to you, and you know that every good picture I make is yours. Why did you ever have an artist for a daughter? Why couldn't I be content like Mary and Esther, and stay at home?

Cagnes, December 27, 1928

I spent Christmas Day at Mrs. Dietrich's, and it really seemed like Christmas because her two children had invited many of their school friends in, although there was no tree like we have at home. Mrs. Dietrich's divorced husband arrived from Germany for Christmas with a broken leg, and he was in a very bad humor over it. It seems that he fell out of one of the windows of the new castle he acquired with his German wife. The Russian Mrs. Dietrich seemed not too sorry he had broken his leg in that way, and the two of them didn't get along at all; their bickering nearly spoiled the Christmas dinner.

Mr. Dietrich is bald-headed, and when he speaks he shouts, as if you had done something you shouldn't have. He hobbled up to my studio to look at my work, and all he said was "Ump . . . ump . . . pretty good." I told him I was disappointed in Cagnes, that I had never expected to find a peasant village so sophisticated. He admitted that it was pretty awful now, but said it was really beautiful when Renoir had lived in the part below the hill years ago, and that because Renoir had lived here all the riffraff had come along afterwards, since such painters never have any imagination of their own about where to go.

I told Mr. Dietrich I was thinking of going away, to Italy, because of the cold which kept me shut inside all day long, with nothing to do but draw in the café in the evening or read my pile of Dostoevski. He said that Italy was really the most wonder-

ful country in all the world for an artist and that I should certainly go, and he immediately wrote a note for me to a woman who runs a small *pension* in Florence. I helped him down the steep street to Mrs. Dietrich's, and on the way he asked me how I carried my money, wandering around the world. I said, in my pocketbook, and he let out another ump and told me that I should always tie my money around my neck and pin it to my underwear. When we went inside he gave me a beautifully tooled green leather money-bag and made me promise to pin it inside my undershirt!

We all sat in front of the fire talking, and I asked Mrs. Dietrich what Russia was like. All I could find out was that she doesn't like Russia the way it is now, and that it makes her cry to see all of the refugees pouring into Nice. Mr. Dietrich left that same night to go back to Germany, and while he was waiting for the train he cut some horses out of tin in the most skillful way. When we were putting him into the car, he yelled out to me to give his love to the Rossi family in Florence. I felt as though I were starting immediately for Italy!



## CHAPTER VI

Florence, Italy, January 1, 1929

I am actually in Florence on New Year's day, and I cannot tell you the spiritual regeneration I felt coming down through the north of this country. I traveled third class, a thing we do not have in America, where there are no classes on trains. But in Europe it is very different, and traveling third class means traveling with the army and the peasants, on hard wooden benches, sitting up all night. The cars are not open from end to end as they are in our country; each little compartment is separate and the moment one enters one is shut up in this box-like affair until the next station stop. No one seems to like fresh air in Europe, so you can imagine what one of these boxes, crammed with six or eight people, smells like after a few hours of travel.

We reached the border of Italy in the late afternoon, and I really felt that I was at a border, for the formation of the hills at Ventimiglia makes a natural wall between the two countries. A patrol of strangely dressed soldiers examined our papers; they wore olive-green uniforms with trousers like golf knickers, and in their hats hung long, greenish-black feathers which dangled down the sides of their faces.

As long as daylight lasted I looked out the window at the lovely countryside, every inch of which was tilled and under cultivation. It was like a fairy-tale country, so perfect that there was not a thing one would care to change. We reached Pisa about ten o'clock at night, and the train made a twenty-minute stop. I had not intended to stop there, but when I saw the Leaning Tower against the night sky I could not get back on the train. There is an advantage in being poor after all, for I did not have to bother with any fine luggage; I simply checked my small bag and paint-box at the station and started off in the direction of the Tower. The town was asleep. I didn't see a soul in the streets. The whiteness of the Tower made it plainly visible in the night light; it seemed unusually small to me, but oh, how beautiful with its white stone carved into hundreds of fine

sculptures. There is a sweet little park surrounding the Tower, and in the windows of the old buildings that face it I could see many wonderful books with fine leather tooling, pieces of sculpture, and reproductions of paintings. I felt alone with the Tower and all of the old books, and yet I was not lonely. It was as if I could feel the presence of all those wonderful forerunners of the Renaissance who had worked so long to make this beautiful Tower of Pisa, and I felt that one could never find a more satisfying and civilized place on this earth. As I sat on a doorstep looking across at the Tower it suddenly began to rain, and then the rain turned into hailstones which fell sharply against the pavement and bounced back several feet into the air. I have never seen such a hail storm, and it brought me back to reality. There was no place to go but back to the station, so I slept on a bench with some peasants and children who were also going south. We all took the early Rome Express.

In Florence I came straight to the Hotel Niza, and Mr. Dietrich's letter to Signora Rossi has made them treat me like one of the family.

Florence, January 7, 1929

I have spent the last days in bed with the grippe. Florence is colder than the south of France. It is really like New York in the winter, and there is no heat. Really, I don't see how these people survive in this winter cold without heat. My room is like an icebox with its plaster walls, brick floor, and very high ceiling. When I started coughing Signora Rossi put me to bed at once, and you won't believe it when I tell you there was actually a fire in the bed. She arranged some sort of a contraption of sticks, like poles for a tent, and hung a small, earthenware pot full of burning coals on it. This is supposed to heat the bed, but I'm afraid to move for fear I shall kick the sticks and spill the hot coals all over me.

Signora Rossi has been very kind to me. She is a small, plump woman with very sad brown eyes, and she always wears a spot-

less white apron, so stiff from the starch and careful ironing that it seems to be holding her up. She has two children, a boy, Luigi, who is my age, and a girl, Maria, who is sixteen. The first morning when I started to go out alone she shook her head in violent disapproval and Luigi, who speaks a little English, told me that his mother was afraid for me to wander about the city alone. She said that if the three of us went together, nothing ought to happen, so we all set out.

The first thing that struck me was the face of Mussolini on all the buildings, and even painted on the sidewalks. I made remarks about this, and Luigi and Maria said that I must not speak in such a manner in the streets. Every now and then a great lorry would dash by us, filled with young men in black shirts, singing and shouting at the people they passed. I asked Luigi what they were, and he told me they were the Fascisti. "Florence is much better with the Fascisti," he said. "Before, my mother could not go into the streets wearing a hat, for fear of the Communists throwing stones at her hat." I could only think that now his mother seemed afraid for me to go out alone, so it did not seem any better to me. One feels uneasy here; certainly something is going on. But I'm here only to see the Italy of Giotto and Michelangelo.

Florence, January 12, 1929

These days in Florence pass pleasantly. Every morning I take breakfast with the Rossi family at their table in the dining room of the hotel. Signor Rossi is a very thin, nervous man, who spreads a cloud of gloom over everything. At breakfast he reads the newspaper while he dips his roll into his coffee without looking, and somehow manages to find his mouth without spilling a drop of coffee on the tablecloth. He is employed in one of the government offices in the Palazzo Vecchio, but I don't think he looks very cheerful when he takes his hat and starts out as an employee of the New Italy every morning. However, they seem satisfied with what is happening here, and Signora Rossi says

that Italy has at last settled down to quiet order; that even if one must skimp along, things have started in the right direction again, and that one should be grateful for such a fine man as Mussolini. The trouble is there is such a feeling of tenseness all the time in spite of what they say. There's going to be a big meeting in Florence next week, and I hope to hear Mussolini speak.

I have spent days and days in the Uffizi, and what a beautiful gallery it is. The school vacations are over and Luigi and Maria have gone back to their classes, so I go to the galleries alone. Botticelli has given me the greatest pleasure as a painter, but Giotto and Fra Angelica are something that I never dreamed possible. I had never seen a fresco before; perhaps it is the sensation of the painting being part of the building that gives it such power. I think that there is decidedly a different "illusion in the eye" when one looks at a painting that is actually part of a wall.

But the real delight is in simply walking in from the street, and being with Giotto in a place where life is going on. It's different from looking at pictures in a museum: you don't have to have a ticket, or a guard watching you, and with this feeling of complete freedom you look at a great work of art with the conviction that it was made for you, for the people, and it immediately has a value for you like that of some specially beautiful tree you have found and that you return to whenever you like, simply to drink in its beauty and feel some poetry in life.

Mother, perhaps I can't explain, but something has happened to me here in spite of the fear of what is brewing within these young men in black. Something definite has happened to me as a painter. It is as though I see what being an artist is, for the first time, and I am puzzled because of what seems to have happened to painters and to the whole conception of art in our time. Can you imagine that there is a Donatello standing in a niche in one of the little streets? A jewel of a Donatello right there in the street before your eyes! When I saw this, and the bronze doors of Ghiberti that one passes every day, and the David of Michelangelo standing high on a hill in a little park overlooking

Florence, I thought: this is the way things should be. I think I see a little what made the Italian Renaissance. All these things were made for the people, and even if they were sponsored by tyrants, they got to the people, and I believe that that was the power behind the Renaissance which made it spread over Europe.

I want to learn fresco painting, and I even went to the Academy to enroll. But everything is under such tension here (I have a feeling that people are ready to explode) that I decided it is best just to look at everything there is to see, and then go back to France to work.

Florence, January 20, 1929

This morning I went to the square in front of the Palazzo Vecchio with Luigi and Maria, who had a holiday to hear Mussolini speak. We were jammed tight against the wall of one of the arcades in front of the palace, and I have never seen such wild excitement in a mob of people. When the Duce appeared on the balcony, which was draped with Italian flags, there was such a noise that it deafened me. He would start to shout something, but before he could finish everyone was screaming "*Viva il Duce!*" so it seemed to me that whatever he said was drowned out by the cheers and the yelling. Soldiers in brand new uniforms kept poking us with the side of their sabre-holders, trying to push the crowd back to make room for a parade of young men in black shirts and breeches, who marched in formation around the square. There is a statue of Neptune slightly to the left of the palace, and I could not help smiling at the expression on Neptune's face as these wild young men marched by. Mussolini did not stay long on the balcony, but the few things he yelled at the crowd seemed to give them enough pep to see the morning through, though it was filled with long, dreary speeches by government officials.

I left the Rossis standing by the arcade and walked over to the Duomo. There was hardly a soul inside this great church. I

walked towards the back and listened through the glass windows to the cardinals who were sitting there with their eyes closed, praying out loud. They were very beautiful in their red gowns—I have never seen so many cardinals all at once. I wished that Luigi had been with me, so that I could have asked what they were doing.

Florence, January 25, 1929

Last Sunday I went off alone to Fiesole. This is a tiny village built on the rim of one of the hills overlooking Florence, with a superb view of the city. I sat in a grape field near the old Etruscan wall and thought of all I have seen here. It was the first warm day I have felt in Italy, and the sun made the rose-colored houses below look dusty and hot. Their low red roofs were broken now and again by a spire, with the Duomo and the Tower of Giotto standing out over everything, and the yellow Arno winding through the city. One cannot look into Florence without feeling those men of its past, and it seems incredible that so many great men should have lived all at the same time.

I don't know how it happened, but I suddenly thought of Mexico. Do you remember that painter who got a prize in the Pan-American Exhibition—Rivera? I know that he is making frescoes on government buildings, and that in Mexico they are painting walls. The only wall-painting going on in Italy now has to do with one man's face, which I think is very ugly. Besides, I have nothing whatever to do with the Italian idea of reconstructing themselves, and judging from the strain Signor Rossi is going through I would rather have someone hit me on the head with a rock! I have decided to come home—only to go to Mexico.

When I got back to the Hotel Niza the sky had become cloudy, and while we were eating it started to rain. There is a small sitting room to the right of the big dining room, where the Rossis always go after the evening meal. There are no windows, and the walls are papered with a dirty brownish-yellow wall-

paper. In the middle of the room is a circular table covered with green felt and a lace doily; the chairs are heavy mahogany with red velvet seats that have been sat on so much, yellow threads are showing through the velvet. I have never seen Signor Rossi reading anything except the newspapers, while Signora Rossi and Maria spend all their spare time mending, and Luigi and I play dominoes. This evening I told Luigi that I was leaving Florence in the morning, and asked him to reserve a ticket for me to Pompeii, which I want to see before I come home. Luigi thinks that I am rolling in money, and that all Americans do what they want because they have so much money. When I told him how I had worked and saved for this trip he seemed somehow angry. "We have nothing in Italy, because you Americans have too much," he said and I could see he did not want to change this idea.

Naples, January 28, 1929

The South of Italy is very dirty. On the road to Pompeii from Naples I drove through streets hung with spaghetti, and though it looked very gay, I don't think I will ever be able to eat spaghetti that has been made in Naples. The roads are not paved, and they are filled with donkeys and dirty babies. I had a good look at Vesuvius all the time that we were driving, and I don't see how these people have the courage to live so near that mountain.

I walked through Pompeii with a guide and a group of English people who asked so many questions that I found out everything I wanted to know without opening my mouth. I had such a strong feeling that Pompeii was still a living city, with life going on just around the next corner. The streets seemed more real than the grand vias in Florence. In modern Italy everything feels dead, and I believe that all this new order is only to make up for the glory that has been dead for hundreds of years. Pompeii must have been a very lively city. The streets are constructed better than any modern streets in Italy, and on several

cross-streets I saw stone traffic contraptions to keep the chariots from cutting corners! Nearly every house that had belonged to an aristocrat was painted with frescoes, and I looked closely at these walls. They had been painted differently from the ones in Florence, with a much rougher surface.

This morning I went with the same English group to see the little Vesuvius. We walked on a part of the crater where the ground was not too hot, and there was an awful smell of sulphur. The guide told us to stay on one side of the crater while he walked a few yards out onto it and lit a paper torch, which made puffs of smoke come out of the ground. I was glad to come down from the mountain. The people we saw in the country around Naples looked terribly poor, and there were lots of women pulling carts loaded with wood.

Tonight I am taking the train back to France, and I'm excited at the thought of working again. When I left for Italy I was utterly discouraged, and I looked upon Italy as some sort of talisman to renew my energy and give me a fresh start. It has done that in spite of the New Italy, for the glory of the Renaissance and of Pompeii is still there, and it is very alive for me.

Cagnes, February 5, 1929

It is really good to be back in Cagnes, and I am working hard. Mrs. Dietrich invited me to lunch today, and I told her all I had seen in Italy. After lunch I walked over to see Liam O'Flaherty and his wife. They live in a large *pension* which has a nice garden covered with grapevines. Mr. O'Flaherty had rented a shaggy nag from someone in the village, and he was trying to race it in the field behind the house. We had fun watching him, and after he had returned it to its owner we had tea in the garden; that is, his wife and I had tea—he would die, I believe, if he drank anything with water in it. But he is most interesting to talk to, and of course he is a wonderful writer.

I told him what I felt about Italy, and how I wanted to go to Mexico to paint frescoes. He thinks I'm crazy and says I ought to



go to Russia—that that is the place for an artist, because they are having a modern renaissance and all artists are given jobs by the government. He himself was invited by the Soviet Government last year, and says he will arrange it for me, but that it would have to be done from London, as there is no Russian ambassador in France.

I simply listen to all this; I never have had time to figure out what is happening in Russia. Here in the south of France one sees many “white” refugees. I once saw a whole trainload of “white” officers arriving in the station at Nice, and Rex Ingram has his studio full of beautiful women refugees; but I still do not understand anything about the Revolution. I only know that most of the people I have met these last two years have been enthusiastic. I love to read Pushkin or Dostoevski or Tolstoi, but when I speak of what it is like in St. Petersburg or some other place I often find I am making a mistake, for some people are anything but enthusiastic. There is Mrs. Dietrich, of course, and then there was the very elegant English officer and his wife with whom I had dinner in Antibes one time. When I spoke of Russia with them, the Englishman nearly had a fit. He gave me a long lecture out on the terrace after dinner. It is still all too confusing for me.

Cagnes, February 23, 1929

Your birthday is coming, but I am not sending anything now except my love in this letter. I have some little things I’ve bought you, but I’ll bring them home with me, since that time will not be so very far away. I’m really coming home, so that I may go on to Mexico. I feel as if I were running to keep up with my money. If I had more in the bank, I would stay on here and work as I’m doing, but there is so little of my time left to learn, and I must learn about painting on a wall.

I realize that I do not even know where you are living, since I write to you at the County Charities office. Are you still in the same house? There is a place near the harbor of San Pedro

called "Fish Island" where I used to sneak away and paint when I was supposed to be at Otis. It was all Japanese and poor white ship workers; I dream of it so often, and hope that it is not a blustering city now. Just think, it is nearly two years since I left; they seem so long, and yet so short. Every day has been a new adventure, and every six months a great leap into something entirely new; my life seems to run in six-month periods. But in spite of all that, I don't think I am so different—a bit taller and more developed, perhaps, and my hair hangs way down my back and has turned brown-gold; some days it looks almost red. But I still like to climb trees and stand on my head and walk with great long strides. Only I feel so old now, almost tired out, I have done so much. I have never yet learned to take my time, or realized that there are years in front of me and that most girls my age are safely at home beside their mothers. But I have learned what I want to do, and everything I am I make use of for my painting. I may never amount to one-tenth of what I hope for, but Oh, Mother, I am trying, as hard as I can.

Cagnes, March 15, 1929

I have had the carpenter in the village make a crate for my paintings, and I'm packing my drawings away in the bottom of my trunk. I have never had such mixed emotions, of wanting to stay, and wanting to go. I really love France and I will come back again. I will! But I cannot help thinking back over my time here, and wondering if I have learned anything, if I have gone even a tiny bit forward. Certainly I have seen an awful lot, but much of what I have seen is confusing for me.

I don't think I could ever be a painter if I had to be like some of the ones I have seen in Europe. Do you remember my writing about Jules Pascin? He is dead; they say he committed suicide, and I do not find it at all surprising. Of course, it's much the same at home, except that Americans are not quite so wild. It seems to me that whatever dignity those Florentines had in the past (which certainly shows in their work) has been completely

lost in what we have today. We call it Modern, and though I don't believe we should go backwards, I have yet to see a "Modern" painting with real dignity. It simply isn't there.

Villefranche, April 3, 1929

I write to you from Villefranche for the last time before I get on the boat to go home. I'm sitting on the terrace of a little hotel overlooking the sea, and the *Augustus* (on which I have my passage) is anchored just off the beach. She looks awfully big to me, I suppose because I have only been to sea once before, on the poor little *Montrose*. I can hardly believe I am actually coming home; I will have a long voyage back, fifteen days.

Mrs. Dietrich is with me. She has been so good to me that I don't know what I would have done without her. Some day I want to bring you here to see her—I think you'll like her. I've told you that she is Russian, and she's also very superstitious. The other day in Nice I tried to make her get an X-ray because there's something the matter with her legs. But when the doctor was all set and ready to take the X-ray, she screamed and trembled so, we had to lift her from the table. She says she is a wreck from the Russian Revolution!

## CHAPTER VII

Croton, N. Y., April 24, 1929

I have been going through my old trunk, the one I left home with nearly two years ago. I reread all of your letters, as well as those from Father and the boys. They make me feel very old, because they are letters written to a little girl, one who had never seen snow, or heard eastern thunder, or even eaten blueberries. I had never been alone, and now here I am back in America after crossing the Atlantic in a most fearful storm. I believe everything went wrong on that voyage; we were four days late in arriving, but at last I am on American soil again, and how good it feels.

I came straight to Croton to the Eastmans, as I wanted to have a long talk with them about my decision to go to Mexico. They took me to see George Biddle, the painter, who has spent some time in Mexico, and he listened with great interest to what I had to say (to my surprise) and even offered to give me a letter to Rivera which ought to help a great deal.

I worked very hard over the week end, copying one of the few things I have ever copied: part of a fresco by Rivera. I thought the composition very beautiful; it shows some Indian children asleep at the feet of their mother. I have also painted a portrait of the young son of Floyd Dell, the writer; it is by far the best thing I have ever done. I made very little effort doing this picture, so you see again that there are no set rules for painting.

But to go back to your letters—some make me laugh, and some make me want to cry. I wonder if all children keep so much of the truth about their inner lives from their parents—I mean their frustrations in trying to absorb what they see around them. I have done so many stupid things, and I have often hurt myself unnecessarily, but I think the greatest handicap I have had is being poor. Just being poor requires so much energy to do things that people with money are never obliged to do. The long walks through the snow to work, eating on a shoestring,

continually washing the few underthings one has to keep clean—all this to save the precious nickels for a tube of paint that may be completely wasted. That is the thing that is hardest to bear, the expensive waste, and one has to train oneself never to think about it; one simply has to have the courage to pile on the blue, or the most expensive crimson, if one feels it should be there at the moment. I have suffered terribly in trying to convince myself that it does not matter how many failures I make in what I'm trying to learn, because no one ever makes a perfect picture, and even the greatest masterpiece only fires the artist who painted it to do something quite different. It is an endless circle.

New York, April 28, 1929

The Weyhe Galleries have taken the drawings I made in France; everyone who has seen the work I did is pleased and encouraging. And yet I have been rather a lost soul since I landed, particularly since I came to New York. Although my greatest happiness was to set foot in America, now I am unhappy, and I'm afraid it has to do with something inside me. I have seen John Carroll and Mr. Frankl and many other people who should know about painting, and none of them believe in what I say about painting on a wall. When I spoke of Mexico, they laughed, and said there was no art in Mexico. They are so much older, and have developed so far that it makes me wonder if they are right and I am wrong, although George Biddle did not seem to agree with them, but rather with me.

You do not pretend to know anything about painting, so perhaps I can say what I believe more easily to you, and the fact that you are my mother helps, too, for even if I'm wrong you will try to understand. The truth is that I am completely bewildered by what is called "Modern" art. I don't mean Renoir and Cézanne and Degas, or the rest of the great French masters; I mean the contemporary painters. To me, they are simply painting distorted pictures, and I don't even think they know why they distort them, which is why they are bad. It seems to

me that in every great cycle of art there has been some predominant emotion which filtered through into each work, and which may have come from the environment of the artist. In the Renaissance there was a great dignity in the painting (perhaps it had to do with their religious fervor) and I feel because of that that there must have been dignity in the life of that time. In Greek sculpture I feel something quite different: a unified co-ordination of form which expresses something intellectual and gives a certain intellectual pleasure. But today there seems to be nothing behind our art, and therefore it becomes arty. There should be something to express our age, and I hate to think that what I see is an expression of it, though it may well be.

In Giotto's time there was a real feeling for painting. The very fact that the Popes and the Dukes commissioned great painters to decorate their public buildings shows that they must have had a certain amount of culture and interest in art and the artist. Even the layman in the street was given the opportunity to see something worth while, though he might only take it in in a passing, careless glance. But now—could you imagine President Hoover ever thinking of such a thing? It is true that plenty of public buildings are painted with sunsets and angels to make an effect or just to fill in an empty space, but then America loves effect and hates empty space. What I hope for is to see the day when art will be encouraged to be a part of the life of this country, and I know of only one place where that is happening now: Mexico. Rivera has been painting many of the government buildings with frescoes for the people to look at, and what I have seen in reproduction is very powerful and moving, I believe, because it is the struggle of the Mexican people that he is painting. I would like to do this for our country; perhaps some day it will happen.

Anyway, I'm coming home at last, even if it is only for a week end on my way to Mexico. I want to have a long talk with Dr. Bryan at the Los Angeles Museum, and maybe I can persuade him to give me a wall!

El Paso, Texas, June 10, 1929

I reached the Mexican border at nine-forty-five this morning, but there's so much confusion here that I do not know when I'll be able to go on to Mexico City. You remember Monasterio and Cantu, the Mexican artists who gave me letters to Rivera? I gathered from Monasterio that there was some trouble going on in Mexico, but as we are always hearing about Mexican revolutions, I didn't pay much attention. However, from the looks of things here in El Paso, they have been having a real rebellion, and the rebels are supposed to have gained control of the northern part of Mexico, so that no one is allowed to pass the frontier who is not Mexican. The American officials questioned me at great length as to why I was going to Mexico City, and did everything possible to discourage me; but the letter from your friend, Mr. Matson, of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce to Señor Padilla, the Mexican Minister of Education, was a great help in convincing them of the real purpose of my trip, as were the *Times* clippings showing that I was really a bona fide artist and not a gun-runner.

What luck that I had such things to show! You know I can hardly believe that I have been home and seen you, and that Mr. Zeitlin has a show of my drawings going on, and that Dr. Bryan was so enthusiastic about fresco painting. So much happened so fast, and it was so wonderful just being with you, that it all seems like a dream. I realize now that there was much I never had time, or forgot in my excitement, to tell you. For one thing, when my exhibit is finished at Zeitlin's I would like you to go and collect the drawings, and also to assure both Zeitlin and Mr. Stendahl, of the Stendahl Art Galleries, that I will do everything possible to arrange an exhibition of Rivera's work for them for this fall.

Another really exciting thing I didn't have time to tell you was the result of my last talk with Dr. Bryan. I finally convinced him it would be a good idea to hold a mural competition, the winner to paint the walls of the entrance to the new wing

now under construction. In our talk the project grew into an international affair, with the prospectus going to England, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. This certainly ought to put our little museum on the map if it is carried through; I am only afraid this sudden burst of enthusiasm may be swept aside by all the old stuffed shirt trustees, and that they will decide to use the money to dig up another prehistoric elephant from the LaBrea oil pits. I pointed out to Dr. Bryan, and to Miss Upton, the Art Curator, who joined in the talk, that the Los Angeles Museum was the first institution to get together a Pan-American Exhibition (in which, incidentally, Rivera received his first museum award in the United States) and that they should be first in the mural field, too. I only hope they will.

Late this afternoon I met the Mexican Vice-Consul, Señor Morlette, who speaks good English, and from him I gather that the shooting is over, but the railway through to the capital has been blown up in several places. What a beginning! I felt on the verge of turning back; if I were not so determined to get there, I certainly wouldn't stay in this ghastly heat another day.

El Paso, June 11, 1929

The heat is stifling, and I have spent most of the day sitting in the Plaza waiting to meet the Mexican Consul. I tried to forget the heat by reading something Merle Armitage gave me as I was leaving: a copy of his address before the California Art Club's Open Forum. It didn't help me bear the heat; in fact, it really frightened me, because Mr. Armitage seems to want to be the Lorenzo de Medici of Los Angeles. Already everyone listens to him, and the younger artists at home are under his thumb, simply because he can afford to buy a canvas when he wants to (although he never spends over a certain amount on any canvas, which is so small that in the end it does not really help a poor painter). But in this speech he is trying to prove that there is an "aristocracy in art": he carefully quotes Webster on the defini-



tion of *Aristocrat* and *Common*, and then tries to twist a special meaning out of these words that will justify his right to judge esthetics. I really believe that he would like to feel that he is the arbiter of greatness in the art of our time. He believes that the masses of people have nothing to contribute to art, nor is their judgment to be relied upon, and argues that without people like himself there would never have been artists and writers like El Greco and Voltaire. What he forgets is that El Greco and Voltaire painted and wrote for the people, and not just for men like Merle Armitage. He actually wrote this: "How can the really common people have anything in common with, anything of sympathy for, as aloof and aristocratic a thing as art? If left to the common people, and I use the word 'common' as I have previously defined it, there would be no art." The reason this frightens me is because Mr. Armitage is already the manager of the Los Angeles Grand Opera Association, and now seems on the verge of being the impresario of painters in California. I am glad I'm going to Mexico.

Late in the afternoon Señor Morlette took me to the office of the Consul General. It rather took my breath away, for the Consul is a Colonel in the Army and everything is under military orders. My papers were taken from me (even the letters to Rivera) and sent on to Mexico City for the approval of the Minister of the Interior, and I was told that I might have to wait a week until permission was granted. Then, without rhyme or reason, I was vaccinated all over again—perhaps they think I am contagious. I didn't like the way this was done at all; the doctor had on a dirty uniform covered by a filthy, once-white smock, and I was in a line-up of straggly Indians and poorly dressed soldiers who are apparently on their way to the capital. However, the Colonel was very nice to me, and tried to explain why there were so many difficulties. It seems that what has been going on is called the Escobar Rebellion. Escobar is a General who has quite a background of revolution starting under Obregon. He achieved success with Obregon against De la Huerta, and when Obregon was shot last July and Calles took

control of the government, Escobar led the Obregonistas against Calles. Evidently he has never worn himself out, and in the past months he has been supported by what the Colonel calls "the reaction," that is, the landowners and the Catholics who have revolted against the present government. The Colonel says that Escobar is really a bad leader who has no courage, and that all he was ever able to lead was a band of guerrillas who robbed the banks throughout the north, on the run from Federal troops. Anyway, he seems to have cleaned out every bank on the way to the frontier and simply kept on going until he came to the beach at Waikiki, where he is supposed to be now. So at the moment everything is under control.

In the evening Señor Morlette drove me across the border and I saw my first bit of Mexico. It is like stepping across the page of a book: the difference between the two countries is appalling. I have never seen such poverty, and it seemed worse in this heat; the only thing to do was to look up at the sky; at least the stars gave one a feeling of something bright. We drove to the military barracks which are heavily guarded by soldiers with cartridge belts full of bullets slung across their shoulders. No one seems pleased to see an American, and for the first time I know what it is like to be hated for my nationality. It made me feel sick to look at the walls enclosing the barracks. One could plainly see where the firing squad had done its work.

Mexico City, June 17, 1929

I arrived here last night after a train ride that I thought would never end; it's a wonder the train or any of us got through. I managed to cross the border through a piece of sheer luck: José and Carmen Vasconcelos, the children of a very important Mexican, arrived in El Paso and helped me with my papers. He is nineteen and she is only sixteen, but I don't know what I would have done without them, for my arm is badly infected from the vaccination. We spent days crossing the desert-like

country of the north of Mexico, and we were the only civilians on the train. But then there was only one passenger car, filled with officers, except for us, and the rest of the train was packed with worn-out, ragged troops. Even the roofs of the cars were used by soldiers carrying their rifles, ready for I don't know what. I had to lie down nearly all the way, and I could see their feet dangling over the side.

José told me much more about the Escobar Rebellion, and listening to him, with the constant stops of the train while they fitted the tracks together again, was enough to make one's hair turn gray. It was not until we arrived at Queretaro that a small measure of my confidence was restored about the beauties of Mexico. We had a stop of several hours there, and just seeing the green trees and a bit of grass helped our spirits. José and Carmen and I sat in the Plaza drinking lemonade, and José told me long tales about his father, who is running for President at the moment. He is so sincere in what he says about his father's plans for Mexico. According to José, the future of Mexico depends on the Indian, and Señor Vasconcelos, as Minister of Education, has been struggling to establish a system of primary schools throughout the country. Apparently this is very difficult because he is opposed to a straight Socialist education, being a very ardent Catholic. (Also, he hates Calles.) I have always heard that the Church kept the people down in this country, but José claims that it is the Americans who are mostly to blame. At any rate, it was Señor Vasconcelos who turned over the walls of the Ministry of Education to Rivera to paint, so you can see what luck I have fallen upon.

When we arrived at the station it was like a festival. Vasconcelos was there, and the members of his party had made an occasion of it. We were greeted with a band and flowers and taken in state to the Hotel Princess. This is their headquarters and has large signs hung across the entrance saying, "Vasconcelos for President—Down with Calles." It is all too much to take in at once, especially when feeling so feverish with this infected arm.

Mexico City, June 20, 1929

I have been in bed these last days, as my arm is really bad. My room is very large, like an Italian room. I have been too sick to eat much, but José brings strange fruit drinks from the street to me. He says the Indians make these juices out of the fruit, and that surely it will cure me, but then according to him anything Indian is all right; in fact it is the remedy for everything. Anyway, I have had to drink them.

His father came to see me this morning. He is a very small man with large black mustaches, and his skin is much lighter than José's or Carmen's; I would never have guessed that he was their father. He stood beside the bed and asked me if I felt any better. His voice was very soft and cultured and I thought him very nice, but then it rose to an irritated, ugly pitch as he began speaking of Rivera. From what he said it is evident that he and Rivera have become bitter enemies. Just then one of his secretaries burst into the room and Señor Vasconcelos left me without finishing what he had to say about Rivera.

Later José came in, very upset, and told me that his father was angry at Rivera because he had painted a fresco of him sitting on a white elephant, right in his own Ministry of Education. It sounds very silly to me, but I certainly feel in the midst of something. The worst of it is that it looks as if I will have to get up out of bed to go to Rivera and find out if he will let me work with him, because the Vasconcelistas won't let him come into this place.

Mexico City, June 25, 1929

I hardly know where to begin, for I find myself in the midst of terrible political battles, when I only came here to work. I finally persuaded José to take George Biddle's letter and go to find Rivera. Apparently he was very curious about the American girl who wanted to work with him, for he somehow managed to come and see me here. The first view I had of him was from the

balcony: he is huge; I've never seen a man so fat. He was dressed in khaki pants and shirt, with an enormous sombrero and a pistol hanging from a belt full of cartridges. One would never think from a distance that this man could be an artist, but when he came into the room and close to me I could see his hands, and they told the story. They are like a woman's, so small and with such fine skin.

He spoke to me in French, and he was so nice and kind that I felt I could ask him anything, so I immediately asked him about the trouble with Señor Vasconselos and the fresco of the white elephant. He says that Vasconselos is a mystical nut, and he had intended the fresco to show how impractical he was as an educator of the people. I still didn't understand why an elephant should mean that, so he explained to me that everyone knew that the elephant was supposed to be a fancy toilet, and that it was piled high on each side with books of Aristotle and Plato because Vasconselos had translated these works into twenty-cent editions for the Indians. Also, he had painted a gay lady sitting beside Vasconselos drinking champagne, and this was a portrait of a foolish Argentine actress named Singermann, who had arrived in Mexico with a letter of introduction from a Chilean educator and was supposed to have fallen in love with Vasconselos. I can certainly understand why he is so angry with Rivera, but Rivera seems only amused at the whole thing. I think it was very mean and small, considering that Rivera's first wall was given to him by Vasconselos, but Rivera seems to enjoy his joke so much that I cannot feel really angry, especially as I think he is a wonderful person.

He looked at my drawings and seemed pleased with them; then he told me that as soon as my arm was well he wanted to see me paint. He wanted to hustle me right out of this hotel, and suggested that I go to live with Tina Modotti, a photographer who is a great friend of his. I've heard of her; in fact, I've seen photographs of her taken by Edward Weston which Merle Armitage has in his "collection." Mr. Armitage spoke of her as a devastating beauty whom men couldn't resist, and in the Weston

photographs she certainly looked beautiful to me. Anyway, if I am to work with Rivera I must certainly get out of this place, no matter how I feel, so he's coming this afternoon to take me to Tina Modotti's.

Mexico City, June 26, 1929

I am settled in Tina Modotti's house and I feel much better. She has been wonderful to me, and she is certainly a fascinating person; Rivera told me much about her on the way here yesterday. It seems that she used to live in California, where she tried to get into the movies, and later took up photography with Edward Weston. Her husband was a French poet who died of tuberculosis shortly after they arrived in Mexico with Weston. She did some very fine work in photography here, and also posed for many of the female figures in Rivera's Chipping frescoes. Later she fell in love with a Cuban named Julio Mella, who was a Communist leader, and he was shot to death while they were walking home a few months ago. There was a nasty trial involving Tina, because they said that she had given information to the Cuban police because she was jealous of Mella; but Rivera defended her, and he says these are all hideous lies and that she is just convalescing from the shock of the trial and the death of Mella. He told me that the Mexican press made a notorious affair of the trial and used many of his sketches of Tina in the nude, as well as photographs by Weston, to make it appear that she was an immoral woman. But she has recently become a member of the Communist Party and is giving herself entirely to her work in it, all because of Mella's death.

Certainly it was hard to believe, when I saw Tina, that she could be a *femme fatale*, or an accomplice in a sensational crime. I had expected so much that I was disappointed, for she wore heavy blue overalls and her face was without makeup of any kind, accentuating a sallow, brownish skin. Her hair grows too low on her forehead, and it was parted in the middle and pulled into a bun on the back of her neck, but her eyes were really

striking, and so was the manner in which she held her mouth, half open when she was not speaking. While she and Rivera were talking I noticed a photograph hanging in a simple, narrow black frame over her desk, with a tiny, freshly cut rose placed over the top of the frame. The man in the photograph had a fine head, extremely handsome and intelligent looking, and I knew that this must be Mella.

Tina took one look at my arm and insisted that I go right to bed and stay there until a doctor could be found to clean out the running sores. She even unpacked my clothes for me, and I saw her look at each dress like a nun who has renounced all worldly possessions. Then she gave me a folio of her photographs to look at, but I had a hard time concentrating on them, for in my room hangs a death mask of Mella, and it makes me feel uncomfortable lying on the hard cot looking at him. In the evening Tina's brother, a nice young Italian, came home from his work in a cement factory, and we all had supper together. It was a light supper of chocolate and sugar-coated bread.

Mexico City, June 28, 1929

This morning I managed to go to the American Express for my mail, and I was so glad to receive your letters and the clippings about my exhibition. My arm is really being taken care of now, so please don't worry. Yesterday a young Swiss doctor came to look at it; he wasn't very cheerful about the infection, but he says the worst is over and that all it needs now is to be cleaned and dressed each day. I think it will soon be well, for I feel much better.

There is so much activity going on here. A constant stream of people is coming to see Tina—writers, musicians, and painters who all wear overalls with a red star pinned on the front. Everyone is a Communist, a "red," as you would say; it is evident that one must take sides in Mexico, and the side that the painters are on is red, so I have decided to be red, too. I told Tina about your

work with the poor people and even said that you were a "red." Don't get angry—it is only to help me to work with Rivera.

He came to see me yesterday, and brought me a large bouquet of white roses and some fruit called mangoes to eat. It tasted to me like an orange with turpentine poured over it, but I try to like everything in order to get to a WALL!

Mexico City, June 30, 1929

I can use my arm again—it has really healed wonderfully quickly—so today Rivera took me to his studio and made me paint a picture in front of him. The model was his servant, a dark, thin, uncombed Indian girl called Margarita. I was terribly nervous, especially when he gave me his brushes to work with as well as his palette, paints, and a canvas, because the brushes were stuck together and dirty, the palette was caked high with smears of old paint, and the canvas was like the side of a house. I cannot imagine how he can paint with such things, but I thought it best not to complain. All the same the ordeal was terrible, and then he gave me gasoline instead of turpentine to mix the colors with and it made the paint dry too quickly. But he insists that it is better than turpentine. When I was half finished with the portrait he told me to stop, and then simply said, "Come to the National Palace at nine on Monday morning."

Then he sent Margarita to get lunch for us, and I had time to look around. The studio was sparsely furnished with Indian chairs made out of some sort of animal hide, and a yellow straw mat on the floor. Several of his early Cubist paintings hung on the wall, along with an art school study of a plaster cast figure. He showed me a folio of drawings and told me that I might have any one I chose, so I selected a line drawing of a little boy standing in the farmyard. There were many drawings that I could not quite make out because the water colors were running all over the edges in a manner which I thought must have happened out of carelessness, but on second thought I supposed this might be



some marvelous new technique of the master and that I had better not ask why they were painted in such a way.

He took me over the entire floor on which he lives, and it is full of Aztec and Mayan sculpture, except in his bedroom, where the walls are covered with large photographs of the Red Square in Moscow, and pictures of Trotsky. The house is built around a court and all the rooms open on to it; he pointed down and told me that Lupe Marin, his former wife, lived on the ground floor. She must have heard us, for she came out into the patio and yelled up at him, looking at me as if I were a strange piece of furniture that he had brought home. I was immediately afraid of her, for it was obvious from her tone of voice that she was angry, and when the torrent of words was finished she went right back into her section of the house. Rivera shrugged his shoulders and his face was covered by a huge grin; evidently he didn't mind whatever had been said, and he told me he would take me to meet her one day.

Margarita finally called us to lunch, but she hardly spoke a word and gave me such sinister glances that I felt I should leave without eating the strange food. Rivera is a vegetarian, and the meal consisted of a large bowl (somewhat like the kind we mix pastry in) filled with vegetables of every description piled high in the shape of a mountain; on top of this was a red fish, cooked, and complete with head and tail. Every now and then Rivera would swallow a fiery green chili without blinking an eye, and I couldn't help wondering what possible good could come of such a rigid diet if one sandwiched in these red-hot chilies.

Rivera's house is at the far end of Mexico City, near the Park of Chapultepec, so after lunch he said he would take me back to Tina's in a *libre* (which is what they call taxis here) and show me some of the city on the way. What I have seen so far reminds me of Italy; there is a great deal of filth in the streets, but one gets the impression in spite of that that there is a certain cleanliness because the air is so fresh and clear, the sunlight sparkles like a diamond, and the sky is filled with transparent white clouds. He pointed out the government offices,

*Photograph of Diego Rivera,  
National Palace, 1929*



*Lupe Marin and Lone  
Robinson in Front of  
Portrait of Lupe, by  
Diego Rivera, Mexico,  
1929*



, LEFT. Lone Robinson and Grisha Alexandroff

, RIGHT: Lone Robinson, Hacienda de Tetlepayac, Mexico, 1931. Photo by Grisha Alexandroff

TER: Lone Robinson with Serge Eisenstein  
TOM: Photo of Lone Robinson by Serge Eisenstein



most of which are in the old Colonial Spanish buildings. In front of the National Palace (where I will work) there is a square, and it has the most complicated traffic system I have ever seen. There are no traffic signals, only white lines on the street. Rivera told me not to worry if I ever got lost on a bus or a street car, because every vehicle finally ends up in this square.

The Cathedral, with its doors boarded up, is to the left of the Palace, facing the Square; it is poorly kept and sinking sideways into the ground. We also passed what is supposed to be the National Theatre, an unfinished building with two sets of enormous black-iron horses dangling from ropes halfway up its sides. The dome looks as if an egg had been spilled over its top. Rivera said this had been started long ago, in the time of Diaz, but from the looks of it nothing has been done there for some time.

I am so used to seeing Mexicans at home that I do not feel a foreigner here, although the only signs of anything American are a few Piggly Wiggly stores that sell a limited assortment of American canned goods. Everywhere one sees German names, on stores that sell everything from machinery to aspirin tablets. The only thing that bothers me is the great number of ragged Indians sitting on the curbsings.

Mexico City, July 2, 1929

Today I started work at the National Palace, and I found that my job had to be done from the top scaffolding. It is about seventy feet in the air and the boards are simply tied together in some places, while in others they wobble loosely between ill-fitting nails. I don't know how I even managed to climb the ladder. I was so frightened that there seemed no possibility that I could keep my head from swimming, and I was sure that I was to finish my painting career once and for all in a broken heap at the foot of the stairs below. Somehow I got to the top, and then I had another problem. The small sketch that I had to trace on the wall had to be enlarged to scale many times over, and the

Spanish scale of figures is different from ours. Anyway, you know how bad I am at arithmetic, and now it seems that one must be a mathematician to be a fresco painter! God help me! On top of all this there is the new language. We have several Indians helping, who hold the measuring string and mark off areas in colored chalk, and I can't even say, "A little more to the right, or left," so I am continually climbing up and down, pointing things out. Ramon Alba, Rivera's assistant, tried to be helpful but he, too, speaks only Spanish, so we were like two monkeys, finger-talking. It was hard for me to keep my mind on the actual work today, for most of my energy went into convincing myself that I would not fall off the scaffold.

My overalls created quite a scandal, as this building houses the President and his Cabinet as well as the Senate. The revolution hasn't gotten around to liberating women as yet, judging by the oh-las of these officials when they passed me on their way to work: We have to pass an armed guard to reach the stairway, and when the bugle sounds the changing of the guard, they come and spend their rest period watching me work. I can't tell you how thrilled I am to be actually working on a wall, even though this first step of fresco painting is a boring one, as it is only the preparation. When we finish this scale drawing on the wall it must be traced off in sections, then the whole wall is torn down to the brick foundations and replastered, and the drawing retraced in small sections according to the amount one can paint per day.

Rivera asked me to have lunch with him, and I thought maybe it was to celebrate my first day of work, but he took me to Lupe Marin's. Her new husband, who is a poet named Jorge Cuesta, opened the door, and Lupe herself was sitting on the sofa feeding a small baby. A young painter named Tamayo sat on a stool against the wall playing a guitar; he simply nodded to us and went on playing, while Lupe stared at my legs until I felt so uncomfortable I imagined that something frightful had broken loose from my underclothes. Rivera saw me trying to pull down my skirt and laughed. He said she was shocked because I

was without stockings, so at least I felt that I had done something original. Lupe is a beautiful woman, and when she began talking to Rivera I was fascinated watching her face. Her mouth is large and provocative and her eyes are a sea-green color, startling against the dark, bronzed tone of her skin and her high, aquiline nose. I suppose the eyes are a heritage from some distant Spanish ancestor, but everything else about her looks pure Indian, especially her hands, which are large and masculine. She always speaks too loudly, and of course I can't understand what she says, but I've been told she is a terrific fighter, so I felt uneasy listening to her shout at Rivera. He sat with his two little girls on his knees. Their names are Pico and Chato and he seems to be very fond of them; when they heard his voice they came running into the room and climbed all over him. It all seemed a strange household, the new and the old husbands together with their children, and Lupe obviously running them both.

Mexico City, July 4, 1929

This is our Fourth of July and I suppose you are shooting off firecrackers; in Mexico they do that all the time. On Sunday I saw the churches being opened, for the first time in years, and that was celebrated with firecrackers, too. The Communists are angry that the churches are reopened, but as far as I can see there is nothing else for these poor Indians to do. It was pathetic to see them clinging to the steps of the church, and when the doors opened they cried like children.

I don't know if I am learning about politics or painting here; they are all mixed up together. I really know very little about Communism, but I can cover that up with my lack of Spanish, and in the meantime I keep quiet and listen. One of these days I am going to ask Diego exactly what it means to be a Communist. He is on the Central Committee of the Communist Party, so he ought to be able to tell me. I don't like all of this mixed up with painting; even the house where I live seems to be spotted by the police. It has to do with that trial involving Tina,

which apparently has not finished yet. Tina has shown me all of Mella's letters and pictures, and told me how he has become a great hero to the Communists. He is like a symbol around which everyone I know in Mexico revolves, and unwittingly I find myself in the midst of it all.

Today I had lunch with Diego and a young girl my own age called Frieda Kahlo, who is also a painter. I like her very much. Her hair is cut short like a boy's, and she has the heaviest eyebrows that grow together across the bridge of her nose. I wondered why she didn't cut the eyebrows and let her hair grow, but I suppose it wouldn't go with the boy's shirt she had on. There was a red star pinned above her left pocket, and she told me that she was a member of the Communist Youth.

Mexico City, July 10, 1929

I have taken two little rooms across the patio in Tina's place, and from the tiny balcony I can see the volcanoes; they are beautiful. Every morning the sun shines, and in the afternoon it rains, but it is the kind of rain that makes everything clean and fresh and ready for the sunlight again.

I saw a wonderful thing the other day that I want to tell you all about. Because he is on that Communist Committee, Diego has a great deal to say in the dividing of the land among the Indians, and on Saturday he took me to see the settlement of a land dispute. It was very impressive, and I saw immediately where he got his strength as an artist. But it is especially worth telling you because of your work with the poor Mexicans in southern California, for although such a thing is not done in our country at the moment, it might well happen in the future.

Diego came for me early in the morning and we went to the Palace to pick up two government engineers. They were dressed in khaki clothes and sun helmets, and they carried all sorts of surveying instruments as well as large sheets of blueprints. There was also a group of Indian delegates from the two villages that were disputing over the land. These delegates were called

"agrarian leaders," and they were dressed in clean, white cotton trousers and shirts (the Indians have a peculiar way of tying their shirts in front instead of putting them inside their trousers) and carried freshly polished *machetes* (large knives). Everyone shook hands and we went to the train, which took us as far as Chapingo. This is the village where Diego did some of his best frescoes and I was thrilled at the chance to see them. They are in the chapel of the State Agricultural School, which is a former hacienda that was confiscated by the government (everything seems to have been confiscated here). I was very much impressed with the frescoes, and thought they had more plastic feeling and sensibility than anything I have ever seen. Tina had posed for all the female figures except a large figure of Earth, for which Lupe Marin had been the model.

After looking at the frescoes we went to the office of the Director, and I was surprised to meet a pure Indian, I mean from India. He wore the Communist star pinned on his jacket. Our party then split up into the different motor cars waiting at the School and we drove for nearly an hour through very fertile country, finally arriving at another hacienda. I was told that this one was an experimental collective farm; many families lived together in the large building, tilling the land together. Here the cars could go no further, so I was given a horse to ride and the women loaned me a long, full, pink Indian skirt because mine was too short. Rivera put a sombrero on my head and laughed at what he said was a gringo Indianita. He is much too fat to sit on a horse, so a small carriage was rigged up for him; it was very comical to see the huge fat man in the tiny carriage, and I felt sorry for the horse. When we set out from the hacienda there were about a hundred mounted Indians, with the delegates leading the way and the government engineers riding alongside. Rivera had the road all to himself, what there was of it; the rest of us trotted over the fields. I rode off to one side just to have a good look at this strange procession. It looked like a page out of the Revolution, and I could easily imagine how fierce these Indians might be if they were riding with Pancho Villa or



Zapata to storm and burn some rich hacienda. And then I realized that this still was part of the Revolution, only organized into settling a land dispute in a peaceful way.

In the early afternoon we reached a stretch of hilly land and I heard one of the delegates call out and saw him wave his rifle in the air. Suddenly I saw that the horizons of the hills were lined with horsemen, and when they saw us they started downhill at a fast gallop. The engineers told me that these were the workers from the other village concerned in the dispute. It seemed that everyone had come to see the land divided; women with small babies hanging on their backs came running after the mounted horsemen, and children hung on to their mothers' skirts. When the two columns met there was a great deal of handshaking and greeting, and then we turned off to the right of the hills and started over flat land again. After another hour of riding we came to the river which was the core of the dispute: this was where the boundary was to be redrawn. The engineers placed the blueprints on the ground under a large tree out of the heat of the sun, and the Indians formed an enormous circle so that everyone could have a look at the blueprints, then the delegates bent over the blueprints with the engineers. Diego looked exhausted after the long ride in the carriage; he sat under the tree looking at the people and making notes in a small sketchbook. I think he was far more interested in the people and their expressions as they watched the blueprints and the surveying instruments than he was in how the land was divided. Finally the boundary line was drawn and approved by both sides; there seemed to be mutual contentment over the decision, and the afternoon was to be finished off in a big fiesta.

What impressed me most was the confidence the Indians had in the government officials, and their own behavior about the whole thing. The Indian delegates were serious and quiet and seemed to know exactly what should be done to settle the boundary line in such a way that both villages could share in the water rights of the river. Looking at these people, one could not believe that they were incompetent, lazy, or hopelessly backward. On

the contrary, they seemed to have a very good grasp of what was needed to better their own lives. It was hard for me to realize that this enormous stretch of land had quite recently belonged to one man, who spent his life walking the boulevards of Paris, while these same people lived in a hopeless condition of serfdom. Just to see them bending over the earth and trying to share it fairly together was enough to convince me forever that they should have it! During the long ride back I thought over what I had seen. Each day here in Mexico new things are happening to the way of life of these people. I cannot help but feel that they are moving forward, and I don't see how it can stop and go the other way. I could never imagine, for instance, how one man, coming back from Paris, could suddenly demand that all of these people quit the land by saying that it was his land. They simply wouldn't do it without a fight. And when one sees such vast areas going to waste, and the people so poor, it doesn't make sense. There are too many things wrong that will never be right unless they are changed.

When we arrived back at the hacienda a large table was ready in the courtyard, set with a pink paper cloth and covered with all sorts of Indian delicacies. Rivera sat at the head of the table and the most important leaders of the people took the remaining places on the long wooden benches. I noticed especially that no women were asked to sit down except myself, and I thought again that the Revolution was too one-sided. The Communists say that everyone is equal and should have the same things, and certainly there wasn't enough room at the table for everyone; but still I thought, it is the same thing over again: the smart ones get the seats. Then again, the Communists say that they depend on the people to make the thing work, and I couldn't help wondering if those left standing in the courtyard knew how "strong" they could be if they got together and really wanted to sit down!

I often wonder how sincere Rivera is in what he is doing, for he so often seems to me to have his tongue in his cheek, and yet he certainly is meddling in the everyday life of these people. Of course, he really is violently against what he called English and

American imperialism or any kind of exploitation of the people, and he believes that they learn about their lives and how to better them by looking at his frescoes. But if one goes by Diego's frescoes, the end of all this is simply that everyone will be shaking hands and will have learned to be happy in sharing the mangoes and bananas of Mexico. Maybe that is the final solution of what is happening here, for although some of the most important leaders in the government are Communists, they are different from the Communists I have met in New York because they are so engrossed in what should be done about Mexico. To me, they all seem more Nationalists than Communists, even though they talk all the time about the World Revolution as if it would happen next week.

## CHAPTER VIII

Mexico City, July 20, 1929

The work at the National Palace goes slowly. I have spent the last week drawing the cruelty of the Spaniards, and it makes one's blood run cold to look at some of the forms of torture they employed for the poor Indians. The original drawings for this fresco were taken from the Aztec Codices. The Mexicans have a special name for the Spaniards; they call them Gachupines. Everything Spanish is hated, even the old colonial art which is pushed aside in favor of Indian things. Most of the painters and writers wear Indian shirts and sandals, and their houses are filled with Indian furniture and dishes, just as Diego's is filled with Indian sculpture. I don't know anything much about Spain, but I find myself automatically in sympathy with the Mexicans. Diego has told me how the Spaniards destroyed the ancient Indian culture, and in one place I visited, a little town called Cholula, there are something like three hundred churches built over the ruins of the ancient Aztec temples. The Spaniards certainly did a thorough job there.

I have made a good friend of Frieda Kahlo, even though we cannot speak many words together, and I often go to eat in her house in the suburb of Coyoacan. It is a beautiful old colonial house built around an open patio, and she has made one of the rooms into a fine studio. I noticed a real hammer and sickle tied to the wall (everyone does this and it makes a beautiful decoration) as well as lots of church paintings which I can't imagine why she has (or where she got them). Her father is German and a photographer, but her mother is Mexican and seems very old compared to you. There is also a sister who has a small baby and looks very European, not at all Mexican. She is as soft and easy-going as Frieda is tomboyish and quick. Frieda is in love with Diego, and since he is divorced from Lupe I asked her why she didn't marry him; maybe she will. I like Frieda's work as much as I like her.

I am meeting lots of young painters whom I like. There is a

young boy named Pacheco who paints wonderfully well, and Tamayo is very good, too. Séqueiros, who was one of the founders of the Painters' Syndicate, returned the other day from Buenos Aires, where he spent some time in prison because he is a Communist. It seems that everyone has been in jail; I feel that I have missed something! He brought a new wife back with him, a poetess named Blanca Luz, which means white light, but she looks awfully dirty to me and has a horrid child who got into my paint box and squeezed most of the tubes dry. I met them at a small party Tina gave to celebrate his return, and when I came in he was sitting in the middle of the room like a prophet, talking with an energy that had everyone spellbound. He, too, is a green-eyed Mexican, very handsome with white skin and black, curly hair. Several other members of the old Syndicate were at Tina's. Revueltas, who I am told drinks all the time now, was sitting in a corner very "lit up" and dressed like an Indian. Carlos Merida, who speaks French and English, talked to me about Paris and his life with Modigliani; he is quite deaf, but one of the gentlest people I have met. Then there was Dr. Atl, a funny little man with a beard who paints very badly and who, I was told, was once arrested for bathing in a fountain at Rome. It is hard to picture, for he looks more like the hermit he is now, living alone in the old market of the Merced. Pablo O'Higgins was there too; he used to be Diego's assistant and comes from California, though you would never know it except for the color of his hair. Pablo lives on a roof, and is an ardent Communist. Of course, everyone who comes to Tina's is a Communist; there was a young American writer there who has just arrived in Mexico to take charge of the Russian news agency, *Tass*. His name is Joseph Freeman and he is a friend of many people whom I know in New York. I was terribly affected by the glint in his eye when we met; you would think he was a brother of Rudolph Valentino by the shape of his head, and his eyes. He is writing a story on Rivera, and I've promised to show him the frescoes, including what I'm doing myself.

Mexico City, July 30, 1929

You are making me terribly unhappy with your letters. I don't know why you are so afraid of Communists; they are not terrible at all. Diego says that the only intelligent thing a person can do today is to be a Communist. I finally found the courage to ask him exactly what that meant, and he said that a true Communist must forget his individual self and work only for the collective advancement of the masses; that no sacrifice was too great for a Communist to make in order to achieve success, even the sacrifice of family life (which he says is really a destructive reactionary state of living because individuals in such a state tend to acquire personal possessions). He told me that strict discipline was necessary so they could use all their energy towards bringing about the World Revolution, in order to free the masses from the slavery of the capitalist system, which has proved the real enemy of civilization. According to Diego, there can never be any social or cultural progress in such a system, where a limited group of people control the wealth of a country and the power to buy human labor. All that a man really inherits is a pair of hands and the ability to work. Why should he be obliged to sell them to another? Diego thinks there is simply an illusion of democracy in the world today, and that the real democracy will come from the Soviet system, where there is no unemployment or private monopoly. But the thing he said that really interested me was that Art should belong to the people.

All of the young painters down here believe that, and you cannot imagine the difference between them and the painters I met in New York and France. Here they are serious and have a purpose in what they do. Nearly everyone has some work connected with the Ministry of Education, and we all receive the same pay: four pesos a day. It is not much, but the point is we are sure of it, like any other worker. I don't believe in painters living on air any more. For the first time I feel like a real human being, and not a queer artist, and it all has to do with earning a fixed amount of money and working regularly every day.

It was the Painters' Syndicate which started this idea, and Diego gives credit to Séqueiros for organizing the Syndicate, to which all the leading painters belonged. They worked for a small daily wage, according to the number of feet of fresco they completed in a day. Señor Vasconcelos, who was then Minister of Education, sponsored the Syndicate and agreed to pay them their salary, and he was helped by Vicente Lombardo Toledano, who was the Director of the National Preparatoria School at that time. These two men gave the first walls to be painted, in the two buildings under their control, the Secretariat and the Preparatoria. Besides getting work for the painters, the Syndicate published a magazine called *El Machete*, which is now the official paper of the Communist Party in Mexico, since the Syndicate no longer exists. Diego claims that the whole idea of this brotherhood collapsed because of the pussyfooting of Vasconcelos; it seems he put his foot down when the frescoes began to be too "red," not because of his own beliefs, but because of the pressure of the press and the conservatives who protested that government money was being wasted on what they called "artistic atrocities." I think it is all a great shame, but at least the Syndicate left something good behind in this idea of a fixed payment, and we are all benefiting from it.

I went to a wonderful fiesta the other night given by an Austrian named Count d'Hanancourt Waldo Frank, an American author, gave a short talk on the success of the Mexican Revolution, but he had such a mouse-like voice that what he said didn't hold anyone's attention and the Mexicans only waited politely for him to finish so that they could eat the food, which was wonderful. I met Tata Nacho, one of the most famous popular-song writers of Mexico. He is being sent by the government to the Exhibition in Barcelona, and everyone laughs at him because he is going to Spain.

I have been showing Joe Freeman Rivera's frescoes, from his first one in the National Preparatoria School right up to the enormous History of Mexico on which I am working in the

National Palace. Joe says that this is a monumental work, and it certainly feels like that to me. It is amazing to see the change in Diego's technique when you look at the frescoes in the order in which they were done. The first one was done in encaustic shortly after he returned from Europe in 1922 and clearly shows the influence of the Byzantine and early Renaissance fresco painters; I was terribly disappointed in it. But in the Ministry of Education, where he has done three floors, I find them moving and sincere, especially the ones around the Court of Labor on the first floor. These are of miners, weavers, sugar workers, and cloth dyers, and they are very simple; but as you go up they become more complicated. The third floor is really a series of biting cartoons, such as a panel showing Rockefeller seated at a table drinking out of a glass filled with stock market ticker tape, next to a panel of the poor, sleeping in the open. The Court of Fiestas shows the various Indian ritual dances and feast days, rural markets, the arming of the peasants, and the industrializing of the peons.

For me there is more true feeling in the Court of Labor frescoes, especially in one showing the embrace of two miners, and another with a miner's outstretched arms being searched before entering the mine, than in all the overcrowded, highly-keyed compositions upstairs, which are filled to the brim with bullets, hammers and sickles, and red flags—all painted with thousands of tiny, accurate brush strokes. I suppose that even Diego's terrific energy would never have held out over the period of years it took him to complete this building if he had not fallen into a perfect technique; in the end it became a sort of knitting in the dark, compared with the uneven strokes of the first walls.

While we were at the Preparatoria School we went to look at the work of José Clemente Orozco and I was terribly moved by it. It is so full of passion, so controlled without "effect," so human and filled with love and tragedy, that it seemed sad to me that he has not covered more walls with this great talent.



There was also a half-finished panel by Siqueiros; I suppose he left it when the Syndicate broke up.

I have a feeling that I'm falling in love with Joe. Please don't scold me for this.

Mexico City, August 6, 1929

My life is very busy and I'm working terribly hard. Besides the work I'm doing at the Palace, I have started the first sketches for the mural competition at the Los Angeles Museum. I don't know how the Museum officials will take it, for I must confess that my idea for this work has been influenced by what I have been learning here in Mexico. You know that there are three walls to be done, so I am dividing the theme into three parts: the Conquest of Land, the Conquest of the Machine, and the Conquest of Social Anarchy. I suppose you will wonder what these things have to do with the life of our country. To me it is all in the point of view, and the truth is that my eyes have been opened to a new world that I can no longer separate from the one of being a "pure" painter. What I want to paint now has nothing to do with propaganda, for I believe there is too much of that in the work of Rivera and the rest of the painters here. The things I would like to say through my work are the very simple human things I have always felt, but which I am now beginning to see more and more clearly, although listening to all these people has sometimes perplexed me over what is right and what is wrong in the world, and the solution for it all.

Anyway, I've met one person who doesn't agree with any of my friends. Her name is Mrs. Moats and she is a rich society woman who has lived in Mexico City for years; her husband has the monopoly on chewing gum here. Tina has been photographing her; she has not been able to get a good shot yet and is annoyed with Mrs. Moats, but grim in her determination to take something good, so Mrs. Moats comes to Tina's nearly every day with boxes of beautiful clothes from Chanel and Vionnet to be photographed in. Mrs. Moats has taken quite an interest in me, probably because I am the only "white person" in the group

of painters she meets at Tina's. She gave me a stiff talk about the "people I am mixed up with" and told me about her own daughter, who is a few years older than I am, and is finishing up at some school in Europe. She would like to re-comb my hair and make me over à la *Vogue*, and she even invited me to spend a week end at Cuernavaca, at the house of Ambassador Morrow, who is a friend of hers. She is very alarmed over the spread of Communism in Mexico, and says that Mexico *was* civilized before the Revolution. Nevertheless she is anxious to have her portrait painted by Rivera, and asked me to bring him to a party she was giving to celebrate the redecorating of an apartment she has done for the director of Wells Fargo.

I had quite a time persuading Rivera to go with me to the party. He is having a time of it, by the way, being romantic with Frieda Kahlo. But I had dinner with him after work on the night of the party, and dragged him on with me (he simply would not go there for dinner). I never saw anyone so pleased as Mrs. Moats when we entered the room. The guests included members of the Diplomatic Corps and everyone was dressed to kill—except Diego and me. He had on his usual khaki shirt and breeches, with the large sombrero and the inevitable pistol. I felt very nervous when we sat down, and the decoration of the apartment didn't help to put me at ease: one side of the wall was covered with dark mirrors that had waves in the glass so that they reflected distorted figures. Mrs. Moats told me that this was supposed to give distance to the room, but it only made me feel that I was in Coney Island. Diego sat on a tiny gilded French chair drinking a Martini, and when he deliberately took out his huge red Indian handkerchief and spread it across his knees for a napkin, everyone looked a little frozen except Mrs. Moats, who made a big fuss over him. However, we didn't stay long.

Mexico City, August 10, 1929

You ask me about Joe. Yes, I do think I am in love with him, but I hardly know where to begin to tell you about it for there

is nothing definite to tell. Almost every day he comes to the Palace to take me to lunch. The Mexican lunch hour lasts two hours and after that I am usually so sleepy from the quantity of food one eats here in the middle of the day that I find it hard to return to work in the afternoon. We usually eat in a place called the Café Broadway, where the tables are always set with a large bowl of radishes and green pickled chilies, and the service takes so long that one fills up on pickled chilies and feels perfectly awful when the waiter finally brings the food. But this leaves lots of time for conversation.

I think Joe is brilliant and it makes me feel very dumb trying to keep up with him. He knows so much about everything, especially revolution, which seems to be his business. I like best the days when he spends the whole lunch hour composing poems to me on the back of the menu. I think they are very good, and so does he, but he believes that poetry has no place in the world today. He says it is counterrevolutionary. I don't know quite what he means by that, but so many things seem to be counterrevolutionary that I'm afraid to say what I believe or even wear anything other than my working clothes. You see, Joe thinks that ribbons and silks are signs of decadence, and if I wear them he says that I am a "product of bourgeois sterility." He is always asking me what I know about Mr. Trotsky, and of course I know nothing, but he seems to think I should simply because I am a friend of the Eastmans. It is really very difficult being in love with a Communist. And yet he is very sweet. The other day he asked me if I had ever read Marcel Proust, and when I told him I didn't know who Proust was, next time he brought along a volume called *Swann's Way*, which he read out loud over the bowl of chilies. The only trouble is that there's always such a commotion being made by the generals drinking tequila at the bar and shouting Viva this and Viva that, that I scarcely know where we are in the book.

Joe lives in a room across the street from the Café Broadway. He is studying Spanish with a Venezuelan, an elderly man who claims that he should be the President of that country—that is,

if they didn't have a dictator there now. He sometimes has lunch with us, and I have heard so much about the dictator of Venezuela these last few days, and the horrible prisons cut into the rocks under the sea and filled with political prisoners, that I can hardly sleep at night. But this man has such faith that it will all end one day; he believes that Gomez (the dictator) will soon drink his own medicine.

I often meet Joe in the evening after work, but he is seldom alone then. I usually find him with Fritz Bach, a German economist who was formerly on the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Germany. Fritz speaks English well and knows a great deal about Mexican politics, so he gives Joe much of the information for his dispatches to New York. Then there are usually two others, an Italian and a Rumanian, both with prices on their heads. It's a very funny thing, but whenever I come in everyone stops talking and eyes me with suspicion; I don't think they are polite, and I certainly feel uneasy. If I do say anything, they make me feel that I have said the wrong thing. I am utterly bewildered, but I confess fascinated by all these goings-on, and I suppose they are really making me all the more interested in Joe.

Mexico City, August 11, 1929

The work at the Palace progresses slowly; we have begun to trace off the drawing from the wall onto sections of heavy tracing paper, and have already started to chip the plaster from the first section in preparation for the actual painting. I can hardly wait for this moment to come.

The other day I was sent to the Ministry of Education with Ramon Alba, to restore several of the frescoes that have been mutilated by the students. This is excellent practice for me. One of the panels I worked on was a self-portrait of Diego: he has painted himself as an architect, looking very sick to his stomach. He might well be feeling like that now, for there is an undercurrent of resentment against him here that is growing very

strong. Most of the painters are beginning to call him "the hog of walls," and he is certainly all over the place, although we seldom see him these days at the Palace. There has been a terrible commotion over the tearing down of the work recently completed by Revueltes in the new Health Department; some painters say that Diego deliberately influenced the architect Obregon to do this in order that he might have another wall to paint. I have even been told that during the time of the Syndicate he found excuses to tear down the work of several painters, giving the reason that their coloring did not hold together alongside his own. Certainly in the Health Department there could be no such reason as this.

The Communists say that Diego hobnobs too much with reactionary members of the government, mostly referring to the Minister of Agriculture and Labor, De Negri. There are many Communists from all over the world in Mexico City this summer, and I have overheard them discussing Diego's undiplomatic attitude when he was in Moscow in 1927 (he was invited as a delegate from Mexico to the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution). It seems he wanted to paint a fresco in the Ministry of War, and all the preparations were in full swing for this work when he was asked politely to return to Mexico on the pretext that he was needed there. They say this really was the result of some lectures he gave in the Academy urging more wall painting and fewer easel pictures in the Soviet Union, which antagonized some of the old guard Russian painters.

These Communists are all terribly critical of Diego, and they seem to be getting more so as their own position grows worse. Since the recent Presidential elections they are being forced underground more and more, and in some sections of the country there have been acts of open violence against the workers. This has to do with the fact that the Communists have called openly for strikes in the cities; they say that so far the Revolution in Mexico has only helped the peasants, and they believe that it won't be wholly successful until the peasants and the indus-

trial workers are united, so they are trying to organize the workers and have the slogan "Peasants and Workers Unite" everywhere. Diego has put great banners with those words on them in all of his recent frescoes, but all the same the Communists don't seem to trust him.

For my part, in spite of all Diego's talk, I am not convinced that he is a "pure" Communist, especially since I have learned from Joe and his friends what that really means. Diego is too busy being shrewd in every phase of living: in the way he eats, and dresses, and wears his hat, and divides the land, and makes love (in French) and divorces his wife, and rears his children, and mixes sand and lime and revolution all together, and belongs to the Central Committee of such a hard-driving political party as the Communists—all of these things at the same time with, I think, his tongue in his cheek. He plays the clown, or the serious political man, or whatever, and he is always laughing at the world for being taken in. It's true that he has benefited as an artist from this terrific *joie de vivre*, for it has made him into a real force as a master of our time. But I don't see how anyone can keep such a three-ring circus going forever, when they don't believe in anything that is going on in the three rings. The one thing in which he is sincere, I think, is his love of painting; but he is shrewd about that, too, for he has certainly hit upon the right moment to do what he's doing. No matter how he ends as an artist, so many of his walls have a direct bearing on the life of Mexico today that people will always look at them as documents.

In the midst of all this excitement I have been busy with my own affairs, for in spite of my fondness for Diego and all his kindness to me, I am really too removed from the whole business to care very much about affairs that don't concern me. I have been collecting a series of children's drawings to send to the Los Angeles Museum, with the help of Adolphe Best-Maugard, a very kindly, well-educated French-Mexican artist. This was quite an undertaking, but it is finally finished and the pictures have gone off to Miss Upton.

Mexico City, August 18, 1929

This last week I have been working like an actual laborer, and I'm exhausted but terribly happy. We chipped the right wall down to the brick foundation and it was then completely replastered; now we have actually started to paint the top section. I can't tell you how excited I am. It is the most thrilling sensation to have a brush in my hand again. Although all the preliminary work has been so rough and hard, the actual painting requires the most delicate handling of one's materials: the brush must just touch the wet plaster and never be dug into the surface. It is like stroking the head of a baby, so careful must one be in this painting. My palette is made up of very simple "earth colors," and they are all laid out on a small white porcelain kitchen plate.

The first day I worked the whole day just painting the blue sky near the ceiling; every stroke has to be even, so that the hundreds of tiny separate strokes will look like one broad surface. Tomorrow I am to paint the "sun with eyes upside down." This wall represents Mexico before the Conquest. The composition is very serene, showing the Indians at their daily work, until it reaches the bottom, where the Spaniards come into it: then everything is filled with violence. They certainly must have been cruel!

It is evident that just to have the physical strength to paint on a wall, a painter must be strong and healthy. But I am thrilled with the feeling of doing manual labor that ends up finally in a work of art.

Mexico City, August 23, 1929

Today Rivera married Frieda Kahlo, and at least *that* is settled. Mrs. Moats gave a party for them, but it was rather a mess, with everyone too gay, and Lupe walking uninvited into the midst of it. Mrs. Moats spent most of the time worrying over her furniture, for everyone was spilling and singing, while Lupe

completely stole the afternoon away from Frieda. Diego was the gayest of all, and told incredible stories: one of them was that he had been so hungry when he was studying in Paris that he ate flies, and while he was telling this story he actually caught one and ate it! Mr. Moats was there, too, looking like an old farmer and completely out of place. Diego has painted Mrs. Moats' portrait, and she pulled it out and showed it to me, but I think she is really furious about it for it is all hat right down to her nose, and the hat looks like a coal scuttle. Poor Mr. Moats can't understand the picture and kept asking me if it were really good; I think he's terribly upset that it doesn't show off his wife's beauty instead of the hat.

There is still plenty of excitement about Rivera that has nothing to do with his marriage. I've heard rumors that Ambassador Morrow wants to be known as a patron of the arts in Mexico, and that he has offered Rivera a wall to paint. Anyway, Diego has been going regularly to see the Ambassador, and there is a great deal of resentment among the painters and intellectuals over these visits to our Embassy. They feel that Mr. Morrow, with his Morgan background, represents all that is bad in our country, and that he is trying to sugar-coat "American imperialism" here. It is known that Morrow has been personally buying a great deal of land in the state of Morelos, Cuernavaca particularly, and they feel that this gesture of "giving something back" to Mexico, in the form of being a patron of the arts, is simply to cover up the growing unpopularity of our Ambassador.

At any rate, Mrs. Morrow is definitely being a patron, and is buying a number of paintings by Mexican artists. I met her at a tea given by Count d'Hanancourt the other day, and she was talking about a plan she has sponsored to give puppet shows in the Casa del Indio. The Casa del Indio is one of the first experiments of the Calles government; it's a school founded with the purpose of incorporating the Indian into civilized Mexican life. Its students have been chosen from the various *pueblos* (villages) throughout the country to be trained as teachers, and are then sent back to their native towns to teach; they represent



almost thirty of the fifty-two different Indian tribes in Mexico. From the talk I heard, I gather that the sponsors hope this experiment in puppets may prove a very valuable way of instructing the illiterate Indians. I don't see why it shouldn't, for this government has certainly used other forms of plastic art in place of the printed word to portray ideas.

I think I wrote you how much I wanted to meet Orozco, but all the time I've been here he has been in the United States. Only a few days ago he returned, and Tina says he is very bitter, as he can get no walls to paint here. Yesterday as we were coming out of the Palace after work, Ramon Alba pointed up the street and said, "There's Orozco." I turned and saw a tragic looking figure with only one arm, and there was something about his walk that reminded me of a hunted animal.

Mexico City, September 10, 1929

The storm has finally broken. Rivera has accepted the offer of Mr. Morrow and is going to paint the open corridors at the rear of the Palace of Cortez in Cuernavaca. This is the place where the conquistadores first crossed this section on their way to Mexico City, and the corridors open on to a terrific landscape of mountains and ravines. From what I hear through the Communists, it sounds as if Rivera would be thrown into the ravine himself. Joe presided at a meeting of the Communist Party the other night, at which a resolution was passed expelling Rivera from the Party because he has accepted money from an "imperialist capitalist." The idea seems to be that Rivera was the biggest trouble-maker in Mexican politics, and that Morrow had been sent to try to stop him from painting American capitalists all over walls. In order to stop this, Morrow offered him another wall, supposedly as an American gift to Mexico, and offered to pay him more money than he had ever seen at one time before. But there were even more important reasons than that, apparently, for expelling him. One was that the work in the National Palace is sponsored by a renegade government: that is,

Portes Gil has shifted so far to the right since the first cartoons were drawn that he now represents something even worse than Mr. Morrow. And then there is the third stigma: that Rivera has accepted the directorship of the Belles Artes from this same renegade government, a government which is persecuting Communists.

Diego seems to be doing all right for himself, in spite of all this trouble. He and Frieda have moved from his studio in the Calle Tampico to a house on the most fashionable boulevard in Mexico City, the Paseo del la Reforma. He has discarded his khaki for a grey pepper-and-salt American business suit, and Frieda has changed from *huaraches* (sandals) to bright orange leather high-heeled slippers! She has even put on some fancy dresses instead of her usual boy's shirts.

At last I have met a Russian Ambassador. Joe has taken me with him several times to the Russian Embassy, and I have sat in on some of the powwows that take place during the sumptuous luncheons of champagne and caviar. The Ambassador, Mr. Makar, is a funny little man always overdressed in tails and a high silk hat. His wife is a simple, fat, peasant-looking woman. She has had her portrait painted by Diego, and it hangs with blue velvet curtains covering it like some icon. There is quite a ceremony when it is shown, and it seems to me like looking at a portrait of the Czarina; it is painted like that, too. The other day at lunch the Ambassador asked me many questions that I could not answer, and I noticed that the eyes of the other comrades looked at me as if to say, "She knows all the answers but wants to be naïve." The truth is I know nothing about anything but painting; I have never been able to keep up with what I fell into here. But these steely looks just don't believe me. When I left that day the Ambassador said, "Of course you will not continue to work with Mr. Rivera." I can't for the life of me see what business it is of his whom I work with.

Mexico City, September 25, 1929

These last few days have been so full of excitement, most of it unpleasant, that I am ready to come home and say, "To hell with it all." I don't see how I can go on working under conditions like this. After Diego was expelled from the Party there was quite a to-do in the press. He stopped work on the Palace and sulked alone in his new house. Of course, I went to see him and it soon became obvious from the collection of people who began turning up there that "the opposition" was being formed. Overnight friends have become enemies, and it is all too complicated for me to follow. Diego himself seems in good humor again and is taking the whole thing almost as though he were secretly glad of it. Perhaps that's because it lets him out of trying to follow the Party discipline, which he never succeeded in doing anyway. However, it hasn't stopped him from eating those enormous bowls of queer food.

The second time I went to see him he asked me to work out several cartoons for the windows that are to be done in stained glass in the new Health Department building. (I caught a bad cold working in the damp, half-plastered rooms of the Health Department!) When I had finished the drawings for the windows, Diego asked me to keep a promise I had made long ago—to pose for the figures that he's going to paint on the ceiling of a room in this same building. This is where the fun really began.

I went to his new house very early yesterday morning. With the constant rains everything has become awfully damp, so when he asked me to take off my clothes I was a little annoyed, especially as the only means arranged to keep me warm was a little electric bulb Frieda turned on. Diego perched me up on a hard table and brought a long garden hose which he wrapped around me—it was supposed to be a snake. Towards the end of the morning the bell rang; Frieda went to answer it and then came rushing back up the stairs looking like death. She said, "It is Señor Freeman and he has a pistol." Diego always carries a pistol, even with his new clothes, and I saw him give the handle

a gentle pat before he started down the stairs with Frieda clinging to the front of him. I quickly got rid of the "snake" and dressed, and when I came into the room downstairs it was such a funny sight I could not control my laughter. The three of them sat without saying a word, simply staring angrily back and forth. When Joe saw me he took me by the arm, rushed me out, and pushed me into a taxi which was waiting. He wouldn't speak until we reached the Russian Embassy, and then it was only to say that the Ambassador wanted to see me—alone—in his private study.

The room was full of monkeys and parrots and screaming birds (the Ambassador is a collector of these animals) and I had a long wait. I couldn't help thinking again what a sumptuous mansion this was; I had never imagined that a Soviet Embassy would be so elegant. When Mr. Makar finally came in, he sat down and looked at me without saying a word. At last he pointed at a large, badly painted picture of Lenin standing with his hands in his pockets in front of the Kremlin, and shouted, "Who is that man?"

I said, "Your Excellency, that is Lenin."

He shouted again, "What is Lenin the symbol of?" and "What is the proper conduct of a Communist?"

I couldn't answer these things, so then he said, "You have been posing for Rivera?" and I said "Yes."

"Of course you had your clothes on?"

I answered, "No, Your Excellency, I was posing for an allegorical figure of Continnence and I had no clothes, but a hose on."

Then he got really angry and said, "Do you realize, young lady, that you are the fiancée of a brilliant young man whose work means the success of the Revolution, and that you have brought disgrace upon him by what you have done this morning?"

I hadn't even realized that I was officially a fiancée, so I said nothing, and the Ambassador went on and on, shouting at me, until finally the butler opened the door and announced lunch.

I was marched sternly down the hall into the dining room, and the table was filled with "comrades." They eyed me again with great distrust, and looked at Joe with great pity. I really couldn't stand it, so I asked to be excused and came home, firmly convinced that I had had enough of such horseplay.

I really was furious and started packing, and I had nearly finished when Joe came in with his Rumanian and Italian and some Mexican comrades. They all looked at my luggage, and then Joe said, "You must be a spy if you would leave me like this."

That seemed to me so silly that I burst out laughing and crying at the same time, but when I finally got my breath I think I convinced them all that I was just a painter and not a spy. I couldn't even think who I was supposed to be spying for, but it seems to have something to do with Trotsky and the Eastmans and Rivera. Anyway, they finally left Joe and me alone and everything got straightened out, and I am going to marry him because I love him in spite of all this nonsense. I think it will be better when we're not in Mexico, and I'm ready to leave anyway.

Mexico City, October 10, 1929

I wish you were not so opposed to my marrying Joe; I'm sure if you knew him you'd like him. Of course, it's hard for you to understand him; I find it hard myself, but I really love him and I would like him to succeed in what he wants to do. I even want to be what he wants me to be, though it seems that to get that way I must wipe out everything I have been taught and start all over again. But I'm trying very hard and I think he's trying, too. My biggest problem is to get him out: he's supposed to be reporting on Mexico, its affairs and its people, but he doesn't go out and look at them. He just sits in his room or in the Café Broadway and reads reports, or listens to the comrades who report to him, and then he writes his dispatches from that. It worries me very much, for I know that he's trying to make a

name for himself as the Latin American expert for *Tass Agency*, and I don't see how he can do this by shutting himself up. He speaks harshly about Carleton Beals, the man who preceded him here for *Tass*, saying that he never reported the labor and agrarian news properly; but it seems to me that to do it better, Joe ought to see for himself.

One thing that makes it difficult is that there is so little to do in the evenings here. There isn't even any theater excepting a few burlesque houses, but Joe likes one of these very much because there is a weekly skit on current political affairs. The star is a large fat man called Roberto Soto, who is as popular as Charlie Chaplin is at home. Last week he did a take-off on Rivera dividing the land: he came out with a huge gunny sack filled with dirt, sleepily put his hand into the sack, and threw handfuls of dirt at the group of Indians who followed him. This brought roars of laughter from the audience, and it *was* funny. There has been an effort to start a serious theater here this summer, and we have been to one of the plays they put on in an old Colonial house they rented. Of course, there aren't any serious actors here; it is the writers and painters who are trying to create a theater, and they are led by a woman named Antonieta Rivas Mercada, who is a member of an old, aristocratic family. She was an ardent supporter of Vasconcelos when he ran for President, and now she has founded a magazine called *Ulysses* to help get the theater started. The play we saw was *Orfeo*, by the French writer Cocteau, and there was an earthquake during the performance. They have given that play several times, and every time there is an earthquake. I should think they would drop it.

Last Sunday I wanted to go to a bullfight, but Joe wouldn't let me. He said that a real Communist was opposed to violence, and that bullfighting was a form of social decadence. So we went instead to a fiesta at Los Remedios, and I was delighted because it was the first time we had been out in the country together. We stood on the side of a hill watching the Indians in their native dances, and I saw that Joe was almost crying. He said that all religion should be abolished, that it was invented only to cover

up the misery of the working classes. But at least I know that he has deep feeling for the people, and that is something that I can understand.

Mexico City, October 15, 1929

I am leaving Mexico at the end of this week. With all of these goings-on there is not much use in staying any longer, and we are no longer able to paint at the Palace. If I had not fallen in love, perhaps I could still be patient and concentrate, but as things are, this whole Mexican situation is the cause of endless quarrels with Joe. They always end up in forgiveness on both sides, but as long as I go on working with Rivera they will keep starting up all over again. Joe analyzes Diego inside and out as though everything that the man does has some hidden meaning. The other day Diego came to work at the Palace for the first time in weeks, and he changed the drawing of the central figure on the main wall. Previously we had drawn a large female figure holding a worker and a peasant in her arms, and he re-drew this figure, putting fruit in her arms. Now Joe and the rest of the comrades say that this proves that Rivera has fallen into the arms of the reactionary bourgeoisie. I'm getting sick of the words, and I can only see the whole thing from the standpoint of an artist. I thought the composition bad before, and I believe the change he made helps the painting. But Joe argues that this represents positive proof that Diego has betrayed the Revolution, and the same criticism applies to an easel portrait he has done of a young woman who posed in a white tulle evening gown with gold kid slippers. For me, this portrait is beautifully painted, and a technical triumph in the way the textures are handled, but the Communists are furious at what they call a bourgeois portrait, I suppose because the lady did not wear a red shirt.

Much of this violence of feeling is due to so many people being arrested in Mexico City. The government is apparently trying to wipe out the Communist Party, and they have suppressed the official paper, *El Machete*. Joe files long dispatches to New

York on the situation, and according to him, Portes Gil is wrecking the Revolution. Diego has announced in the papers that he is in sympathy with Trotsky (who was also expelled from the Party) and this created another bombshell, almost greater than the rumor that diplomatic relations between the Mexican government and the Soviet Union are to be severed . . .

The summer has gone, and along with it so many things. I feel like a passenger on a subway train, trying to hold on to what I have. I have been packing my paintings to bring home and getting tangled up in endless red tape. I have to fill out forms in practically every government building, attach a photo to each form, and have each one rubber-stamped, all to prove that these paintings are mine and do not belong to the art treasures of Mexico. I should think that anyone could see that by looking at them. The trouble is that so much has been taken out of the country since the Revolution that in trying to put a stop to it they are being over-careful. I would never have finished but for Jorge Encisco, who is the Director of Colonial Monuments and a brother-in-law of Adolphe Best-Maugard. I met him at Mrs. Moats', and he is one of the handsomest men I ever saw, very aristocratic and cultured. He is one of the few Mexicans she ever invites to her house, and I'm certainly lucky to know him, for he has been of enormous help to me.

At least I am coming home with something. I have learned to paint on a wall, I am engaged to be married, and I have done enough pictures for an exhibition. I hope the Renaissance was never like this!



## CHAPTER IX

New York, November 20, 1929

Dearest Mother:

I hardly know how to begin this letter. After the way we parted last week, it seems that you will never be reconciled to me as long as I'm an artist. Before I left Los Angeles I never told you about my conversation with Dr. Bryan at the Museum. Added to the opinions you have about painting and my friends, I felt too discouraged to say anything. Dr. Bryan told me that he was giving up the idea of the Museum mural project, because the trustees had voted on using some sort of marble in the wall space set aside for the murals. He took me all through the unfinished wing of the Museum, and when we came to those marble walls, I could tell by the look on his face that there would never be any frescoes there! Even the idea (the Open-Air Art Schools for the children in the city playgrounds) didn't seem to impress him. Dr. Bryan would always smile and come back to explaining how difficult it was to convince "taxpayers" about such things. I don't agree at all with this point of view. It would not cost them much, and when one thinks of the wonderful pictures children could draw if they were given paper and a few colors. . . .

I cannot help but feel that it is best that I came back to New York and that I am going to marry Joe. He met me at the train with a box of red tulips and seems glad to be back here, too. But Mother, you have made me terribly unhappy by withholding your approval. And now I must make all the plans for my wedding alone. To be a bride seems the most wonderful thing in the world. Why can't you wish me well, instead of making me feel that I am committing a crime?

I only hope that my leaving California has brought a little peace to Mrs. Alston and the rest of your friends. I would never have hung the hammer and sickle with the Mexican serapes if I had known that it would make so much trouble for you in the County Welfare office. I thought the apartment looked nice,

but the effect was funny in a way. One would imagine I had tacked a hornet's nest to the wall!

Miss Upton, the Curator of Art at the Los Angeles Museum, wrote me that my exhibition will finish in another week. I'm afraid you'll have to drive out there and collect the pictures. If you hang any in your apartment, I would like it to be the *Blind Guitar Player*. I know that you think it's too sad, but I should tell you that that is a splendid criticism, because that was exactly the way that poor Indian looked.

Sometimes I wonder how you go on with the work you are doing, with all those poor people who receive help from the county charities. I will never forget the day you took me to Belvedere Gardens and asked me to take photos for you of those people living on that garbage dump. When one sees conditions like that, it makes one wonder about the Communists. Sometimes I think the Communists made a mistake in using a red flag for a symbol; that color excites people just like the *capa* does a bull. Every time you and Mrs. Alston heard anyone say "red" you both turned into something charged like an electric wire.

Don't worry too much about my political ideas. I could never really become a Communist. I would be expelled from the Party after the first week for not walking on what they call the "Party Line." They've got a repertoire of about twenty words that covers everything, and if you don't stick to those words, it's just too bad. But the "Party Line" wobbles so that only a tightrope walker could stay on it! Nevertheless, I like the idea that there could be a world where everyone could have enough to eat.

Brooklyn, N. Y., November 22, 1929

Dear Mother:

This will be my last letter to you as a "single woman." I'm going to be married on Thanksgiving Day! I have asked Joe to write to you, but he is very busy with his work at *Tass*, the Russian News Agency. I'm staying a few days in Brooklyn with his brother Harry and his wife. They seem happy that Joe is going

to settle down. But Joe's boss, Mr. Kenneth Durant, sent a wire from the west, asking Joe why he was going to get married. Joe speaks of Mr. Durant as "K.D."—he seems to idolize him—and he was upset over Mr. Durant's telegram. Tomorrow night I'm to meet the rest of the Freeman family. I only hope that they will like me. Certainly we are getting married with enough opposition. I bought a long green dress with silver sleeves for my wedding. Joe did not like it. He said a Communist's wife shouldn't wear such things.

Brooklyn, November 27, 1929

Dearest Mother:

These last days have been so exciting that I have hardly had a chance to write you anything. We have found an apartment on the fifteenth floor of a new building overlooking the East River. I wanted to live in an old house downtown, but Joe says that one shouldn't live in anything that has to do with the past. The apartment we found was full of light, and I shall have a room to work in. At the moment we are busy buying furniture—a wedding present from his father.

Joe asked me to pretend that I was Jewish. He told me that if his mother and father knew that I was a Christian, they would be against our marriage. He said being a Communist had made his parents unhappy, and they would be heartbroken if they knew he was marrying a Gentile.

I am trying awfully hard to be Jewish. It seems difficult, especially after spending these last months being initiated into the Communists' doctrine, which insists there should be no such thing as race prejudice. And now on my wedding eve my race is a problem for my future husband . . . I have never thought about races being different. These days are strained; I feel suddenly an outsider in my own country. Joe is very nervous for fear I will say the wrong thing and let the cat out of the bag. He told his family you and Dad came from the Old Country so long ago that you forgot how to speak the Hebrew language.

*Ione Robinson, Age Sixteen*



*Author's Mother*



*Lone Robinson and her daughter Anne, Summer, 1938*

Mr. Freeman is not at all like the man I had imagined Joe's father would be. He is very rich. When I met him, I was really puzzled. I had pictured Joe's family as being poor workers, and I thought that was why Joe had become a Communist. Mr. Freeman has a Lincoln limousine with a Negro chauffeur. He dresses like a banker and wears a large diamond on his little finger.

The family lives in Flatbush. I had never been there before, and never imagined New York had such a homey suburb. When we finally arrived at the house, I was taken into a large, heavily-carpeted room; the rug was so thick that it was like walking on grass. Joe showed me how to "make sparks" if I dragged my feet across it quickly and then touched a gold bird cage at the end of the room.

The room was filled with amazing pieces of furniture. In front of the fireplace was a long, marble-topped stool. The windows were hung in heavy brocade. I sat down in a Louis XV chair, and Joe disappeared with his father. I watched the two canaries in the cage and wondered how they ever kept alive in such a gloomy place. I sat there waiting, as frightened as the birds. Finally Mrs. Freeman came in, dressed in a black velvet evening gown with a white rhinestone bodice. Her arms were covered with flour, and she explained to me that she always cooked the "Sabbath" meal on Friday night.

There are six children in the Freeman family. Joe is the eldest, Harry a few years younger, Nat, his small brother, the youngest. Selma is sixteen and very pretty. Sonia looks Russian, with her black, slanting eyes. Marion, the oldest of the girls, is married. Her face is sad, and she did not enter much into the conversation.

When we went in to dinner, the table was piled high with food unfamiliar to me. Mrs. Freeman lit the candles and started to pray. Joe whispered to me not to say a word. There were many toasts during dinner, until everyone became a little tipsy. And then Mr. and Mrs. Freeman began to cry, the crying turned into laughter, and we all went upstairs into the "Rose Room."

This room looked like the mezzanine floor of a theater. A large canopy hung across the ceiling; blue plush chairs were pushed back close to the wall. At the end of the room stood an enormous radio with an automatic victrola. Everyone started to sing in Hebrew. My sisters-in-law clapped their hands while Joe tried to do a Russian kicking dance. Mr. Freeman kept looking at me, and every now and then he would ask me a question in Hebrew. Joe would twirl over to my rescue, until finally he was so exhausted from the dancing and sleepy from the "schnapps" that he called it a night and rang for George, the chauffeur, to drive us back to Brooklyn.

The thing that worries me is the furniture that Mr. Freeman wants us to have in our apartment. I could have cried. But I managed to get around it by reminding Joe that he was a Communist and making him a little uneasy about what his friends might think if they saw him sitting in a gilded chair!

I hope, darling, that you are happier. Now that I am going to be a real woman, please, dear, let us be good friends and forget that I am a painter.

New York, December 2, 1929

Mother dear:

We were married shortly after your long distance call came through. How I love you, dear, for telephoning and wishing me well on my wedding day, and for drinking a toast to us at the hour we were being married. I was thinking then only of you and of home. It was such a beautiful Jewish wedding, even though it was not in a church. I have never been in a Jewish church. What happened impressed me so much that I felt like an outsider looking at my own wedding. The Rabbi was a little man with small hands shaped like a woman's. They looked as if they were made for blessing people. It is the custom for the men to wear their hats. I almost messed things up when they put them on. I was about to ask Papa Freeman if he was leaving just when the ceremony was beginning! I don't know what stopped me.

Joe and I stood under a blue canopy with ancient Hebrew symbols. After he had placed your mother's ring on my second finger, he was obliged to break a glass. If the glass is not broken at the first try, then it brings bad luck. You should have seen Joe smash that glass! After that, we both drank a glass of red wine, and everyone ran up to kiss us, all crying bitterly. I almost wept, too, but remembered in time that I had black stuff on my eyelashes.

The Rabbi asked me for my father's and mother's Hebrew names. Joe thought some up for both of you before I could answer. Then we sat down to an enormous dinner. Everybody sang and cried at the same time. Later we escaped and went to the Hotel Pennsylvania. In our room there were two reproductions of da Vinci.

The next morning we came here to our empty rooms and waited for the furniture. As yet no chairs have arrived, and I am sitting on a soap box writing to you. Joe has so many books, the cases are stacked to the ceiling. I feel as if I'm sitting in heaven and just starting my real life. I'm glad to be married; being settled will give me a chance to see what sort of artist I am.

This afternoon I'm going to buy the curtains for our apartment. This will just about end my shopping. I'm glad because I want to get to my painting.

New York, December 12, 1929

The first weeks of married life must be strange for everyone. I have been married just two weeks, and I begin to feel that I am nothing—that I know nothing about anything in life. Every morning at breakfast, Joe still reads Proust. It seems that the character called Swann is like one of the movie serials I used to go to see every Friday night. He never ends. What he says and does bores me. But if I do not listen to Joe reading about Mr. Swann at breakfast, he claims that I'm unable to understand what real genius is.

For dinner we always have some rabid revolutionist as a guest,



and the conversation just floats over my head. I find myself setting the table, cooking the dinner, and washing the dishes as though I were not present, as far as the others are concerned. The other night an author, Michael Gold, who has just written a book, *Jews Without Money*, came to dinner. He was dressed badly and sat in Papa Freeman's expensive easy chair smoking a cigar and flicking the ashes onto our nice new rug. He told Joe he was surprised to see him married and living in such a bourgeois manner, and seemed to blame me for the surroundings. I thought he was horrid, and you certainly would not have liked him.

K.D., Joe's boss, is back in New York and seems to be very ill. Joe spends a great deal of time with him in his apartment. It seems that Mr. Durant is having a lot of trouble with his wife, who is a writer. Joe says she is very intelligent. He confides to me that Mr. Durant is in love with his (Joe's) former sweetheart. I was hurt and very jealous listening to Joe's description of this woman. Joe says that jealousy is a negative emotion and that revolutionists should never be jealous. But I couldn't help thinking of the time he went after Rivera with a gun. Mr. Durant's wife calls Joe continually on the phone about this woman; and the woman, who is in Washington, calls continually to ask Joe's advice. It is absolutely unbelievable that they can both listen to him with such confidence. He then relays their messages to Mr. Durant who, in turn, tells Joe what to say to them. I don't think Mr. Durant can be very ill and keep this up for long.

The other day Joe read me a letter from Pablo O'Higgins, the American painter in Mexico. It is the first time I had any idea of what was going on down there during the summer. I'm greatly worried about being mixed up in things I know nothing about, but because of my work with Rivera, Joe seems to think I fully understand.

Pablo wrote that he had a lot of important things to tell Joe and Tass that Carleton Beals had never reported completely. He said that Beals was lukewarm and had shown reactionary tenden-

cies of late. He went on to recount the persecution and white terror which they were suffering down there, which had started with a raid by the police on a meeting being held by the Juventud, the C.C., and the Local Committee. The Party had realized that the police were laying plans for a raid, but had not expected it to occur so soon. All of the comrades—thirty in number, most of them youth members, with the exception of Barreios and Julio "Rimirez"—were arrested.

He said that they expected more arrests all the time, with deportation of aliens, and that it was impossible for them to get in touch with comrades who had been lodged in different jails all over the city. He went on to say that Gaston L., who was hiding with him, was handling the legal procedure. Apparently the arrests had been instigated by General Ortiz, commander of the Mexican forces, on the ground that the whole incident was anarchistic. General Ortiz's men had brought several bombs which they had planted for the police to find; and then the newspapers came out with the report of a huge anarchists' plot against Calles. Not once was the word Communist used. Pablo wanted Joe to write an article exposing this persecution, unless he thought it cut in on Beals. He said Siqueiros made a speech at the close of Tina's exhibition which expressed frankly what the Party thought of Diego—and called him an opportunist and a collaborationist.

It frightens me to think of being mixed up in such a hornet's nest, and I'm glad Joe is away from it now. But that letter and the emotional upheaval I'm now going through make me wonder about Joe's activities.

New York, December 15, 1929

Late one night last week Joe took me to the office of *Tass*. The office itself was very shabby. The walls were covered with Russian posters and the furnishings consisted of a few tables, chairs, and large, flat, yellow desks. I felt almost as if I were in an "illegal" place. I suppose it was the people who worked there that made me feel that way. A short, stocky woman named

Bessie, with a boy's haircut and glasses, just said "How do you do" without looking at me. And a tall man flirted and winked as he said "How do you do." Joe told me later that he was a "crack anarchist" who had been in many jails and knew how to make a bomb from things he could buy in the ten-cent store! It was thrilling watching them send cables to Moscow.

The next day Joe let me go with him again to *Tass*, and later we went down to see Mr. Durant, his boss, who comes from an old Philadelphia family. I wondered why he was involved in Communism. He lives in a large apartment full of antique furniture. Everywhere were large vases filled with pine branches that had dried up, and the pine needles were falling all over the floor. It looked to me as if his wife were one of those nature lovers who tries to bring the landscape into the living room.

I had to wait a long time before Joe called me to come into the bedroom. Mr. Durant was lying in a strangely painted bed with a bright red blanket covering him tightly to the chin. His hair looked very wiry. It shot into the air and gave him such a funny appearance that I hardly knew how to say "Good afternoon." He looked at me and then said, "So this is the child bride," and then went on talking to Joe.

Later in the evening we went to dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Eastman and Floyd Dell and his wife, Bee Marie, who is from California. It seems that people in New York never eat American food. We had all sorts of queer things—and everyone was gay drinking red wine. Joe held my hand—and then started to write me a poem on the back of the menu. When he finished, he read it aloud to everyone. Mr. Eastman asked him if he really thought it up; Joe became angry, and our party ended badly.

New York, December 18, 1929

Mr. Carleton Beals is spending a few days with us. I don't understand how Joe could invite him after criticizing him so. He has just arrived from some place in South America and, as you will recall, was the former *Tass* correspondent in Mexico.

Joe complained all last summer that he never really "covered the news" well in Mexico because of his bourgeois background. I was surprised when Joe brought him home to stay, his bag full of dirty socks (which I had to wash out). Mr. Beals gave me a large Mexican lacquered gourd for the washing I did!

I have set up my easel and am hard at work. The other day I painted a good still life of flowers. I was really pleased with what I had done. When Joe came home and saw my flowers, he got angry. He sat down and gave me a long lecture about art belonging to the people and that I should paint workers in "compositions with a content." He was really so unhappy and upset over this still life that I felt I had committed a crime by painting flowers. He gave me the *New Masses* and told me to look at the illustrations. The only thing that I seem to see in the drawings there is that everyone is being hit over the head, hung, or starved. I don't see how anyone could make such ugly drawings—and I don't understand what they have particularly to do with "the people." I am certain a worker would like to look at a beautiful flower more than at a picture of a policeman hitting him over the head.

Joe brought an artist home from the *Masses* for me to talk to. His name is Louis Lozowick. Mr. Lozowick draws factories and bridges in cubes. I think they look dead and uninteresting. Joe thinks they are wonderful. Mr. Lozowick spent nearly an hour telling me about the history of art being related to the working classes. I think these Communists take themselves too seriously in all the formulas they invent about life. After all, anyone can sit down and think out such arguments and fit them into "historical events," according to one's point of view. The thing that interests me most is simply learning how to paint. There are so many technical things I want to know and must learn in order to be a good painter. For me the greatness in art comes from the sensibility within the artist, plus his ability to be master of his medium. Joe insists everything is "subject matter." If that were true, then a chromo painter who paints a worker would be called a genius simply because of the subject he paints; and because

Cézanne paints apples, he is nothing. I often bring up this point about Cézanne and other great masters. Joe defends his point of view by saying they were victims of the decadent bourgeois dealers in art, and that in Russia, where art is part of the government, no such thing is possible. I asked to see some reproductions of Soviet paintings. He showed me some, but for me it was all "candy box" painting and boring, to say the least. But then, I never believed Russia was a painter's country. They are much more clever in writing, music, and in the theater.

What makes me most unhappy these days is that I feel drawn more and more within myself. I resent Joe's constant nagging about my work. After all, it would be worse for me if I completely stopped trying to be a painter. I wish that I had a small studio away from home, some place to go to and do what I want.

Joe has started a book with three other people called *Voices of October*. It has to do with the cultural development in the Soviet Union.

It is December in New York. I begin to feel as sad as these gray skies. I don't know how to explain what is happening inside me. It's as if I have two selves and one is sitting down and balking all the time.

Every Friday we go to Flatbush for dinner. The Jewish people have a religious custom that is celebrated every Friday. These dinners are an ordeal for me. Last week I asked Mama Freeman for some butter, and everyone stopped eating and looked at me as though I had lost my mind. Later on Sonia took me upstairs and told me her father was convinced I had lied to them—that I was not Jewish. She asked me to tell her the truth. I did, because I see no reason to keep up this preposterous pretense. Between Joe's week-day revolutionary friends and this complete change that happens to him every Friday, I cannot keep up with it all. I begin to feel as though I had to dress for a part each day. When Friday comes and we start the long journey to Flatbush, I actually begin to feel ill; and by the time we arrive I feel as though I were catching gripe. Joe says I am neurotic and need to be psychoanalyzed.

New York, December 20, 1929

I have decided not to paint any more. I'm afraid if I go on being an artist my marriage will end on the rocks. I can hardly believe it, because I have been married such a short time. A little over a month! We are certainly getting along badly. I blame it more on Joe's women friends. They are all so much older than I, and they are all people who have done some extraordinary work for the Revolution. I had a talk with Mr. Sender, a very nice little man who comes often to the house. He works on a magazine called *The Labor Defender*. I asked him to give me a job, and told him that I would work for nothing if I could be "useful to the movement." He gave me the job, and I'm working in an old rattletrap building downtown. First he gave me a job of typing, but I was too slow in picking out the letters; and frankly, the thought of learning to be a stenographer irritated me. But I want so much to do something useful immediately, so that everyone won't look with such pity at that poor Mrs. Freeman.

I spent several days addressing envelopes. I thought of you and your work in the welfare office. This office is much the same. Everyone is always in trouble. When the phone rings it is usually some comrade in trouble with the law. Really, these Communists have courage, to get involved in so many beatings by the police. I don't see how they stick it out! Yesterday I was sent over to the Tombs prison to make some sketches of some of the defenders who are being tried for rioting in Union Square—or that is what the court says. Mr. Sender asked me to go to the prison because he said I looked like anything but the wife of a Communist—he said that I was the only one who could sit in the courtroom and not be picked out by the police.

I was supposed to listen carefully to the testimony and make notes for him. The drawing was my own idea. If I can get away with it, I may actually do something that will please my husband.

New York, December 21, 1929

I feel really ill. I don't know what is the matter with me. Joe sent me to a psychoanalyst. I didn't want to go, but he made me. He says I am not ill at all except in my head. It frightens me, because I think he may be right! The doctor was nice enough, but he asked so many personal questions that I really began to feel crazy. I had hardly the strength to answer. I do have a bad cold, but he does not think that is why I am ill. Anyway, I am not going back to him again. I don't believe in telling everything under the sun that you feel or dream or think. Suppose I just sat there and kept telling anything that came into my head. How would he know the difference, when he added it all up? Everyone of Joe's friends has been analyzed, and they claim you are a new person when it is over. I can only say I don't like what any of them are.

I went to see Mr. Arens the other day. He introduced me to a very nice woman who works on *Vanity Fair* magazine. She asked me for the photos of my paintings, and promised to show them to the editor.

New York, December 24, 1929

The other day I was called to the office of *Vanity Fair*. From the elevator one walks on a floor of stars into the reception room. I sat on a large sofa and looked at the Chinese pagodas, pine trees, and exotic tiger lilies in the wallpaper design. Bookcases lined the side of the room that opened on a terrace. When I went to take down the *Life of Byron*, I found the book was hollow inside! Not one volume in the whole room was a real book! I wondered if that was considered the vogue—books without pages!

Mr. Crowninshield, the editor of *Vanity Fair*, finally came out to see me. The first thing I noticed were his glasses. They were like half-moons rising from each side of his nose. He kept looking up over the lenses, with his chin bent into his neck.

The walls of Mr. Crowninshield's office were covered with French paintings. He had three telephones on his desk. They kept ringing constantly, and I marveled at the manner in which he could carry on three different conversations at the same time. It looked exhausting to me!

He was surprised that I was only nineteen years old, and seemed to like the photos of my work. You don't know how this lifted me up, to find someone who likes what I am able to do as an artist! He took me to lunch in a beautiful café where all the waiters speak French, and then he brought me home. I showed him a folio with some drawings, and when I finished I had to sit down, I felt so ill. Mr. Crowninshield looked at me and said he thought I had a temperature and asked me for a thermometer. As I had no thermometer in the apartment, he went downstairs to the drugstore and bought one. He was in the midst of taking my temperature when Joe came home. When I introduced Mr. Crowninshield to Joe and explained who he was, Joe was very rude. It made matters worse when Mr. Crowninshield told him I had a fever. But the storm really broke the following day when I received a beautiful woolen bed jacket. Joe wanted to tear it to bits and return it to Mr. Crowninshield himself. I begged him to control himself, and said that I would return the jacket. I waited until he was asleep and then hid the box with the jacket under the bed. In the morning when he had gone to work I sent the box back, with a nice drawing by a Mexican child. I really felt that I had to do something to make up for Joe's behavior, which was all because he believes Mr. Crowninshield represents a segment of society that must be liquidated.

After I sent the package back, I went out into the snow and walked to the river, wanting to jump in. I sat near the edge of one of the buildings and started to cry. I never wanted to go home again. When I finally got up, I took a taxi to see Mr. Frankl. He was upset to see me in such a state. I tried to persuade him to give me my old job back again. I don't want to be married any longer. I am desperately unhappy.



New York, December 26, 1929

It is the day after Christmas, and what a Christmas! Yesterday I tried to make some peace with myself again. I thought if I fixed the house nicely for Christmas, Joe would forget our troubles. I bought a tiny tree and trimmed it with bright, colored Christmas balls, filled the room with holly, and hung a piece of mistletoe over the hall door. When Joe came home he took one look, and without speaking grabbed all the balls from the tree and threw them down onto the car tracks of the elevated train below. Then he took the tree and told me to give it to the janitor. After that he told me to sit down, and shouted at me about Christmas being a pagan custom of capitalist society. But what really annoyed him was the story of Christ!

I am convinced that I have made a terrible mistake in my marriage. There is no use going on.

New York, December 29, 1929

I am asking my nurse to write to you. I'm in St. Luke's hospital. I have pneumonia and pleurisy. My lungs were drained of nearly two quarts of liquid. It was very painful, and I was very much afraid because I was all alone. The only thing that I am grateful for is that I finally found out what was the matter with me. Papa Freeman took me to his own doctor, who examined me, and brought me immediately to the hospital.

New York, January 20, 1930

Three weeks have passed. I still feel terribly weak. Mrs. Reed, my nurse, is a large, strong woman. She tries to make each chore of the day last as long as possible, to fill in the long hours spent lying flat on my back. This morning I looked at myself when she was washing me. I seem to have become very small.

Papa and Mama Freeman are very faithful in coming to see me. It seems that there is another family crisis going on. Selma,

Joe's little sister, confided in me that she wanted to be an artist. I encouraged her to be whatever she really believed in. She insists it is painting. When Joe learned of our conversations, he became very angry and said, "My sister will never become a painter as long as I am able to prevent it." Today Mama Freeman cried when she told me about Selma. She has only one more year of high school before entering college. It seems that everyone has Selma's life cut out for her. Joe's dislike for artists is probably his own frustration in not being a serious author. I still do not believe that he is convinced of his own arguments, about poetry being a thing of the past and newspaper work the twentieth century form of creative writing, etc.

His visits are few and far between at the hospital. Lydia Gibson, the wife of Robert Minor, the Communist leader, came to see me for a few minutes the other evening. She said that I must learn to accept and understand how important Joe's life is for so many other people. She told me how often she is separated from her husband because he is in jail, but felt these were small things that wives of good Communists must endure.

Instead of coming to see me, Joe sends telegrams. They must sound good to him when he thinks them up, but by the time Mrs. Reed opens them and lays them beside my pillow, I wonder. Today he told me (in a wire) that he loved me. Yesterday he hoped my pain had gone and that I was getting well—that nothing mattered except my health. The day before he was contrite because he couldn't stay longer, told me to relax, rest, and be patient, and said he loved me because I was so unspoiled. I have a whole pile of these stop love stop pieces of paper, but I rarely see my husband, and when he does come, I hear only the wildest stories. Mr. Durant is still sick. He has been moving from one hotel to another, trying to run away from his wife (but he always lets her know where he is). The Russians have set up a trading corporation in New York. Joe says the man who is the director, Mr. Bogdanoff, is very smart. They are trying to get the big business men to see how profitable it would be to recognize Soviet Russia. With the crash of the stock market, Russia seems

the only place left with cash to spend. Another paradox of our time!

Joe tells me he went to see Mr. Frankl the other night and Manuel Komroff, the writer, was there. He writes that they sat around and talked for hours. He says that Komroff reads everything, remembers a lot, but cannot co-ordinate his knowledge. Joe says this is a result of his snobbishness, that he is from the lower middle class, seeking to become an aristocrat, and that he has lost his base; hence, he cannot give form to his knowledge. Then he goes on to tell me that later they went upstairs to the apartment of Rita Romley and met the actor, Jacob Ben Ami. Joe writes he is a fine actor and, like most Russian-Jewish intellectuals, very serious and full of information about social questions. Joe says it is good to hear an actor talk about political parties, collective farms, and the five-year-plan.

New York, February 10, 1930

I was allowed to sit up a little today. How good the world looks outside this window. But I am still confused about my life. I try to put all the people I know together into some coherent pattern. They all have so many quirks in them, yet they all seem to be after the same solution, which they believe is in the Russian Revolution. I don't see why they can't think about "our" revolution. It seems to me that there are wonderful words to remember in our American Declaration of Independence. In the second paragraph, "We hold these truths to be self evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men." To me those are the most wonderful words. But these are the words that excite Joe: "That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it and to institute a new government." He believes that in reality we have no democracy, and that the only freedom that exists for the

workers is to sell the power of their hands . . . in order to survive.

When I remember the long line of apple sellers on Times Square, I certainly feel there is something fundamentally wrong in the world today, but I cannot believe the rigid constitution of the Communist League will be the only solution. What happens to a Communist when he steps out of line is a terrifying example. He might just as well continue to live on the moon. When one has even an iota of fear in him of overstepping the rules of a game, then he certainly has to stop a good deal of thinking in order to keep on playing. I don't see how the workers will ever arrive at the state of being emancipated proletarians through fear of the big bugaboo who sits on a "central committee." Joe's ideas about proletarian love, on the other hand, need a little fear put into them!

The week before I came to the hospital, a friend of his, a blond social worker, arrived in New York. She came, literally, to live with us, and even wore my clothes! Joe wrote me naïvely that his mother had noticed with indignation that Alice was wearing my brown shoes and brown dress, and that she was furious with her for staying so long. My mother-in-law realized how a wife would feel about such things, and had not hesitated to tell Joe that this situation in itself was enough to make me ill. Joe said that he had asked the girl to leave, so that I needn't worry—that it was all over. Then he changed the subject by doing some poetry, which he asked me not to mind, and quoted some wise man as having said that conversation was the art of concealing thought. He remarked that I should know how true that was, because so often in the past few days, as ill as I was, I had uttered strange foreboding phrases which I had refused to explain, plunging them into his heart like so many cryptograms which only time could decipher.

The next day Joe wrote that he had been to Joe Baker's the night before and that they had poured beer into gullets already soaked with cocktails, wines, liqueurs, etc., yet they were all sober, only a little gay and talkative. The talk had switched to Russia, and he said he had talked well, answering a million

questions, and that he wished I would get well and be a real-comrade.

I wonder what I will be when I get up from this bed. It has been nearly six weeks since they brought me here. Certainly I have had enough time to look at my family "lying down." I feel that I do not want to be a part of Joe's revolution—I want to come home.

New York, March 1, 1930

When you receive this letter, I'm afraid you'll have to make preparations to take care of me. The doctor says I must leave this climate until I regain my health, or I may have a relapse. I was sent down to Atlantic City for a week after I left the hospital. Joe's sister Sonia took me there. Poor Sonia really wanted a holiday, and I felt sorry to have been such a burden.

In the morning, when it was warm enough, we would ride along the boardwalk (I should say we were pushed). In Atlantic City Negroes are used to push the wicker carriages. Sonia was always dressed as though she were going to meet her best beau: mink coat, corsage of white gardenias (in the afternoon an orchid). Of course, I had to be in bed around six. Poor Sonia would sit with such a lost look on her face that I phoned Joe to come down for a few days. It's a good thing he came, because I'm tired of hearing about some terrific event that is about to happen in Moscow—by telephone! Since my marriage, I feel that anything I might personally ask my husband would be sabotage of the Five-Year-Plan!

When Joe did arrive, we spent two days being pushed up and down the boardwalk in the wicker carriages, Joe with a pile of newspapers and his red pencil checking off the turmoil of events that are happening in this country today. When I watch his face, satisfied with each capitalistic calamity, and the way he bites at the end of his pipe and says, "The Revolution is really coming!" I want to scream. But I have not the strength to do even that.

And all the time Papa Freeman is paying for the hotel here—and each day he is losing his money on the stock market! When I was in the hospital he would look at me in such an anxious way. I knew that it had to do with the way his stocks were falling, so I begged the doctor to let me go home sooner than I should have.

Atlantic City is the most common, unimaginative, vulgar place I have ever seen. It really made me ill to look at the buildings. They are an endless imitation of all that is bad in architecture. This, with the "human freaks," fortune tellers, and ugly people eating spun sugar made me want to return to New York. When Joe arrived he hinted that I was becoming anti-Semitic (because there are many Jewish people in Atlantic City). Of course, such an idea never entered my head. Nevertheless, his attitude made me feel in an instant that perhaps he was beginning to resent my not being Jewish.

Could you send me seventy-five dollars to come west? I think I can get the rest from Joe. I don't want his family to spend any more money on me. Joe is already two months behind in our rent. I don't know where his money goes. For one who hates money, he certainly likes to spend it!

Mr. Crowninshield has been brave enough to come to see me. He bought several drawings—did you receive a letter from him? He told me he was going to write to you. He says I must go home. In spite of all this trouble, I am still terribly in love with Joe. Perhaps if I were older I would know what to do.

## CHAPTER X

New York, May 1, 1930

The trip back to New York did not tire me as much as you feared it might. The weather here is warm. Do not worry about my catching cold. I feel that I'm well on the road to being my old self.

During the long weeks I spent with you, being so lazy and inactive, I had the first chance since I went away from home in 1927 to think clearly. In reality, just a few years have passed, but so much has happened, and I know that this is still just the beginning of life for me. I have worked hard to learn a few fundamental truths about painting, but I confess I'm confused in determining certain things about life. I don't feel secure.

Your own life is so constantly upset by the uncertainty of events happening every day in this country. I felt it distinctly, because of what you do with the poor and unemployed in California. There seems no end to the misfortunes of the people who come to your office for help. The other day I started to read the Communist Manifesto; I don't know anything about political economy, but what I have read seems logical and sensible. What I can't accept is the theory that all life is based on the materialistic necessities of people, or I should say that the actions of people are entirely motivated by their economic needs, because history shows that some of the most wonderful achievements of men have been the result of a moral and spiritual force that is in them. I believe that we need more than "bread alone" to justify our life in this world.

Joe has been very good to me since I returned. He didn't like my boy's haircut. I hope it grows out fast, but I suppose I'm lucky to have any hair at all, after the long months of fever.

New York, May 11, 1930

Today is Mother's Day. I should send a wire to you, but in a few days this letter will be in California. With it goes all my

love. The Communists don't think much of such "sentimental days," especially things that have to do with families. Joe tried to explain to me the Marxist theory on the home. He says that the "cell of the home" is the beginning of capitalism, because people collect "property," and they make a corporation—yes, of a home! And what they collect is usually with the idea of handing it on to one's children or relatives; thus begins jealousy, hoarding, and competition, mixed with greed and the desire to possess things . . . and exploit others!

I want a home badly; I have tried so hard to make our apartment attractive. It spoils all the fun when one has the feeling of guilt mixed in such things. But perhaps Joe will change. Already he is more tolerant towards my painting, and the other day he even bought me a beautiful book of Cézanne.

I wonder if the Russian people are actually the way these American Communists are? The other day Mr. Bogdonoff came to have dinner—he is the head of the Amtorg Trading Corporation and rather the unofficial Russian Ambassador in this country. As you know, we have no diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. Mr. Bogdonoff was dressed neatly and his manners were exquisite. He talked with such sympathy and knowledge about painting that I began to have my doubts about what Joe calls "the official view on art."

New York, June 1, 1930

Next week I'm going out to Croton-on-the-Hudson to spend several weeks with Lydia Gibson (Mrs. Robert Minor). Her husband is one of the Communist leaders—I wrote you about him before. Recently he was tried and convicted for organizing workers and inciting labor riots. He has to serve a six-month term in Welfare Island prison. At the present time he's in the hospital there, recovering from a brain concussion, the result of being blackjacked by the police (or Mayor Walker's Cossacks, as the Communists call the mounted police of New York).

Mrs. Minor is under a nervous strain from all this. She is an



excellent painter, and so we both ought to forget our troubles, working together in the country. Mrs. Minor is a tall, beautiful woman; she is very wealthy and her name was in the *Social Register*, but of course it has been taken out since she married Mr. Minor. She loves her husband with such devotion that it is clear nothing else matters in her life.

Joe has been taking me to meet his friends, and we have gone to several large parties at the house of Rebecca Drucker, who is married to a Mr. Bernstein, a lawyer. They have one of the largest apartments I have ever seen in New York. It is always filled with people and the talk is very interesting. This is the place where all the "elite" Communists meet. Mr. Durant seems to adore Rebecca Drucker. He is well enough to go out, now and again, but he always has to eat strange things because of his stomach. Miss Drucker doesn't mind how many people eat at her house. When I go there, I usually make a dive for the kitchen and help the cook prepare the food. You know how I love to cook. But I do this to feel more at ease within myself. The only time these "intellectual people" pay much attention to me is when I have prepared some good dish for them to eat.

I have never heard so much talk as the talk that goes on in this place. Everything under the sun is discussed—I mean everything to do with politics. I am learning a lot. I listen carefully, and I feel that I know the ins and outs of every politician in this country, as well as in Russia. There never seem to be enough "strikes" going on here to suit these people, and when a good one is on, they do all they can to make it last! The Scottsboro Case is the big thing at the moment. The more the stock market crashes, the better these people like it. I'm so worried with Joe's debts (he's always in debt) that I can't imagine what life would be like for him without money. He seems to need so much of it all the time! To hear him analyze the collapse of Wall Street and cheer it is really a paradox.

Last Sunday we had breakfast with a Mr. Alex Gumberg, a fat, lame, middle-aged man, married to a beautiful woman from California. Mr. Gumberg is the head of the Atlas Corporation.

He is arranging a number of business deals for the Russians, in connection with large firms in this country. It all has to do with the Five-Year-Plan. Joe told me that Mr. Gumberg had been a close friend of Trotsky and that they had planned the beginning of the Revolution in Russia together. I could not help but wonder how Mr. Gumberg managed to escape so many threats on his life, with his game leg. He looks sinister enough to be plotting almost anything at the moment, and he is rich enough to make it work!

The last time we went to the Gumbergs', Joe invited a photographer, Margaret Bourke-White, to go with us. She carried a long, black walking stick, and she wanted to go to Russia. Joe flirted violently with her and I was terribly jealous, until Maurice Hindus, a writer, came. Hindus is actually leaving for Russia in a few days. Miss B.-W. dropped Joe and concentrated all her charm on Mr. Hindus! Poor Joe!

I have seen Mr. Crowninshield (on the side) several times. He wants me to draw for his magazine. But I haven't the nerve to do it. Mr. Crowninshield is always inquiring about my life with Joe. It is like a movie thriller for him, and I believe he feels that he has his hand on the Revolution when he holds my hand, during our conversations at lunch. We always eat in such elegant cafés that I have a real sense of being mysterious and daring when I tell him what I know about Russia! At least with this friendship I have a glimpse now and again into the world Joe wants to destroy. But when I look at Mr. Crowninshield's face, I can't see for the life of me, why he is a "dangerous" man!

Croton-on-the-Hudson, June 15, 1930

I have been having a wonderful time in the country, and I'm grateful to be out of the heat of New York. I wish that I had just a little more physical energy—I still peter out before the day is half finished. If I had more energy, I could help Mrs. Minor forget her troubles. I only hope Joe never has to go to jail!

Mrs. Minor is allowed to see her husband a few hours every

Friday. She simply lives for this day. When Friday comes, she dresses carefully in the most elegant clothes. She herself is so beautiful that I know she must create quite a stir at the prison, especially as the wife of a famous Communist leader. She always buys a large basket of things from Park and Tilford to take to her husband on Fridays.

During the week we paint, listen to music, and often she tells me stories about her past life, as a lady of "society." They sound so sad and tragic that I can understand why she left it all. But I really believe the reason Mrs. Minor defends Communism is simply because she is desperately in love with her husband! I have only seen his picture: he looks kind and gentle, with a mass of grey hair and eyebrows still black, and so heavy they give his face an expression of strength. Mrs. Minor speaks of her husband so often that I have the feeling he is actually in the house. When I see his clothes, pipes, and small personal things, and remember he is in jail, it makes me nervous.

It is the quick observation of all of these insignificant things that starts my imagination wandering. I visualize mounted police—blood—workers shouting—jails. And then I try to understand, after looking around at the beautiful objects in this room, why this man became an organizer of workers and a believer in Communism, and against the form of government of his own country.

The whole thing is disturbing. At night Mrs. Minor does not sleep, and I can hear her walking in the garden. She has been so good to me, but has forbidden me to speak to the Eastmans, who live just up the hill. She explained that I simply could not see them if I stayed in her house, since Max Eastman is a supporter of Leon Trotsky. Because of her husband's political position, it would cause serious trouble for him if people knew that a guest in his house had communicated with a Trotskyist!

However, last Friday when Mrs. Minor had gone to the city, I sneaked over to visit the Eastmans, and met an attractive woman with black hair combed in straight bangs across her

forehead. She laughed at everything, in a way that was not laughter at all. I hadn't been in the room five minutes until she started to tell Max and Eliena all about her last session with an analyst.

He had asked her to try painting for an outlet, and the room was filled with canvases that looked as if they were covered with snakes—all painted since her last visit to the analyst!

Max treated her with a certain coolness, which only added to her warmth towards him. Her husband is very rich. He owns a "real nut factory," and is paying a frightful fee for his wife to get emotionally well. When her analysis is completed, she is going to divorce her husband and go to Russia.

I have seen Eliena and Max a few times since then, when I have been out walking with Mrs. Minor. But when she sees them, we turn and walk off in a different direction. They must think I have gone crazy . . . but what can one do in such a situation?

Floyd Dell lives next door. He is more or less on neutral ground, as he belongs to nothing. He just writes all day long, what Joe calls "lost novels." Nevertheless, when Joe came out one week end, I could see that he enjoyed the evening we spent with the Dells. The talk was about psychoanalysis. Both Joe and Mr. Dell have been analyzed—but Dell's analysis led him into getting married, having children, and dropping the Revolution. Mr. Dell is a great admirer of Upton Sinclair, the writer. It was interesting to hear Joe pull Mr. Sinclair to pieces, as a writer and as a socialist. Joe says that any liberal who can arrive as far as the Socialist Party without making the final plunge into Communism is so motivated by fear that he is of no use.

We went one evening to call on Stuart Chase, who writes on economic questions. Mr. Chase has been in Russia but he is not a Communist. Croton is certainly full of different "leftists." They have all known each other for years, been friends, and worked together; but now their opinions are so divided, they are more fanatical than the witch hangers of old Salem.

Green Mansions, July 1, 1930

I left Mrs. Minor's house a few days ago to come up here to this mountain camp, to be with Joe. His visits to Croton were so few and far between; when he wrote me that he was leaving the city for his vacation in these mountains Mrs. Minor, who had seen how upset I was, urged me to go, too.

Freddie Oeschner gave me a copy of the book, *Green Mansions*, to read before I left Paris for the south of France. This "left wing" summer resort certainly can be compared to an Amazon "jungle," with its crowds of strangely-dressed people running about. They all wear the most amazing outfits, to get the most out of these days in the sunlight. The camp is so overcrowded that every bit of recreation is run on schedule, bells ringing to mark off the time. It is like a picture by Pieter Breughel. When the bell rings, those on the golf course run for the swimming pool, and those who have been swimming run for the tennis courts, etc. No one wants to waste a minute in getting on to the next diversion!

After dinner everyone goes to the auditorium, to hear speeches about the class struggle. Joe is a great hero here. When I see the way he can hypnotize these people, I think he should have been an actor. His eyes are very brown and they slant just like Rudolph Valentino's. He always looks intently at his audience, keeping the people in suspense, and then he breaks this down with some humorous remark, rapidly followed by something serious. And then he is off! He is really a good speaker, and I can see that the reactions of his audience fascinate and please him.

Durant's Island, July 10, 1930

I have been having the most wonderful time on this Island . . . a place you'd never even dream of. There are many islands in this section of the country, and they are all owned by "the best old American families." Mrs. Whitney's island is right next to this one of the Durants, which it took us ages to find.

We were met at the mainland by a man dressed in a sailor suit, who brought us over here in a speedboat. There was quite a large dock near the "big house," filled with canoes and small motorboats. All guests have private cottages. I didn't meet Mr. Durant's mother until dinnertime, and that was certainly a ceremony.

First we had sherry in the living room of the big house. Mrs. Durant sat in a large chair in front of the fire. She was dressed in black and wore a long string of pearls. Her face was very severe and she spoke in a deep voice. Everyone seemed timid in answering her questions. Both Joe and Mr. Durant were completely subdued. When we went in to dinner, Mrs. Durant was still in command at the table. There was a large spinning affair in the middle with salt, pepper, relishes, etc., but no one dared to spin for the salt until she had set the thing in motion! It is the first time I have sat at a table with Joe that the talk was not about Russia!

Mr. Durant acted like a small boy in front of his mother, and I suppose his actions influenced Joe, who adores him. They were both very funny. After dinner Mrs. Durant left us and we were told not to make any noise.

Later we walked with flashlights through the woods to Mr. Durant's bower of pine needles, near the lake. There was a fire burning in front of this open shelter. Mr. Durant lay down in the pine needles with a "balsam" pillow under his head, and began to ask Joe about the news. Mr. Durant never talks very much, but one can tell by the tenseness of his eyes that he is thinking all the time someone else is speaking. The Russians certainly picked the right man to run the news back to Moscow! Mr. Durant became angry and impatient over the gossip Joe had about a former *Tass* correspondent in Moscow, Mr. Eugene Lyons.

Durant's Island, July 15, 1930

We are leaving this island to go back to New York. Our stay here is ending in calamity. Someone put a real frog in the bed

of Mr. Durant's sister, who is a very proper woman from Philadelphia. She became so hysterical that they had to call a doctor. The whole island is still in an uproar, and Mr. Durant's mother prosecuted everyone in the manner of a Supreme Court judge until she found the guilty party, who turned out to be another very proper lady from Philadelphia! Of course, this has made the whole affair more complicated. I suppose if I had put the frog in the bed, these people would forget the whole incident; as things stand, everyone is still in hysterics.

I have decided I don't like islands. You can't get away, once you are on one, unless of course you have a boat; and Mrs. Durant wouldn't let anyone over to the mainland until she had found the frog culprit. These last days could have been spent just as well in a jail. Nothing but trees to look at, trees and water, and other islands off in the distance with more trees.

I have been getting up as late as I can in the morning. Joe and Mr. Durant talk all day long in the pine bower, with Miss Smith. There are only a few hours in the afternoon when the tension lets up. Mrs. Durant always hangs a large flag outside the big house after lunch, the signal that she is napping, and there can be no noise until the flag comes down! I am beginning to have my own ideas of why Mr. Durant became interested in the Russian Revolution and why he wanted to get away from Philadelphia. His mother certainly has an edge on the former Czar!

New York, August 10, 1930

New York is the hottest place I have ever known. It is hard to believe that one was actually cold a few weeks ago on that island! I have tried to make the apartment as cool as I possibly can, but the ceilings are too low and the heat just seems to settle in these rooms.

I'm painting every day. Joe has a big steel filing case in our bedroom (which is the studio) and it takes up so much space that I feel crowded and uncomfortable. He keeps it locked

tightly. I have had only a few glimpses into it, when he is looking for some particular paper.

The other night Joe's very first love came to see us. Joe told me about her before she came. He said that SHE was the most wonderful woman in the world and really a genius at the piano. When she arrived, I could tell that something frightful must have happened. Her eyes were red with tears, and she had red hair, too. I listened to the most terrifying story, all to do with the man she is desperately in love with now. He seems to be a drunkard, but very brilliant when he is not drinking. Joe listened closely, analyzing every word. When she finished her story, they had both solved her problem. The next morning she would return to her sweetheart, because she really loved him; but that night she was to spend sleeping in our house. We have only one bed, so I had to sleep with Joe's first love, while he spent the night on the sofa!

Mr. Durant's wife is back in town; she has been coming to see us nearly every afternoon. She is a very stout woman who has an unusually beautiful head. She cries all the time; it is frightful. She begins to speak and then the tears just flow from her eyes. When she began to tell me about Chinese glass painting, crying in between each word, I felt distressed and sorry for her. But I am not going to mix into her troubles. I think Joe is making a frightful mistake to become involved in other people's affairs. No one seems to realize that I am his wife, or if they do, you would think that I had no feelings of my own.

Mrs. Durant is so intelligent; it seems a pity that her life cannot be happier. I hope that Joe and I never make each other so unhappy. Whatever our differences are, they are mainly because I was too young and lacked knowledge of what was going on in the world when I married.

I have been following the "flagpole sitters" all over the country; it looks as if this fad is going to end, as one man outsat everybody else in Atlantic City. He stayed fifty-five days on top of a pole!



New York, August 24, 1930

Mary Enter and her family have been in New York. I was sorry that Joe was out of town when they were here, because they wanted to meet him. Mary was a little shocked, I think, at our apartment, as the place is very bare, with rugs and curtains down for the summer. But I had lots of fun showing them the city. Mary looked at New York with the same expression of wonder I felt when I first came here. She could not understand how people "lived in the streets" the moment they left their apartments. I spent the last night of their stay in her hotel. We had breakfast in the Automat and parted, Mary and I each walking in the opposite direction with heads high, crying like babies. When I saw how good and simple Mr. and Mrs. Enter looked, and how they spoke of the city with the same wonder that I still feel, I realized that we westerners are different people. I lost the terrible feeling that the world is ready to blow up, a feeling I always get with Joe's friends. Now that he has returned, I feel it again.

The other night at Miss Drucker's the conversation was wholly concerned with what was going to happen in Geneva on September 8th when the League of Nations will meet. Joe spoke a great deal about the federation of European states that Briand is trying to create. He says that no plan like this will ever work until there is a fundamental change in the system of governments in Europe, meaning that they should be Communistic.

The newspaper columnist, Mr. Heywood Broun, was at Becky's. (She has a painting of his which I think is very good.) Mr. Broun drank so many cocktails, I marveled at the strength of his head. He is going to run for Congress, and he joked with Joe at the publicity the Communists were giving him, calling him a clownish demagogue. Later Mr. Durant came in; he looks much better, but it is only because he has a good suntan. Mr. Durant spoke a great deal about how stupid it was that we did not officially recognize Russia, if for no other reason than to help our domestic trade, which would ease up the depression a bit.

New York, September 12, 1930

The time is near when one has to renew the leases on New York apartments. I have tried to persuade Joe to move from this place, as we are three months behind in the rent! I am frantic; the owner keeps hounding me. But Joe says that everything will be all right, that he will have the money by the end of the month. I don't know where he will get it, as his father has had so many setbacks from the stock market crash that he is unable to help us.

I have decided to go to work. Mr. Durant's wife works for Lippincott, the publishers. She thinks she can get me some illustrating to do—and that perhaps I might make some portraits of different authors for the newspapers.

This, on top of the drought, unemployment, the Drys fighting the Wets, and the English quarreling with the French about which one is going to have the upper hand in Europe—is enough to wear me out!

New York, October 3, 1930

This will be a quick note to thank you for your birthday greetings. It is hard to believe that I am twenty years old. I didn't have much of a birthday, as we have been moving. I finally persuaded Joe to take a smaller apartment in the same building, as long as he is determined not to move to another section of town.

I found out that the owner's son (who lives in the building) likes pictures. When he came to collect the rent the last time, he admired a picture I had recently finished of some women picking wheat in a field. I gave it to him in exchange for taking something off our bill. President Hoover said today in the newspaper that the trouble with the country was due in a large part to pessimism and fear in the people. He was right—I have plenty of it!

New York, November 5, 1930

I have not written to you for over a month. The reason is I have been painting like mad. I want to apply for the Guggenheim Fellowship. If I get it, then at least I will be able to take care of myself. I had dinner with Mr. Kent the other night to speak about this. He hardly recognized me, I am so thin. We went to the Gay Nineties for dinner. He wanted to know all about my life, but I was spared telling him because a "Prince Romanoff," who is going to live with the Kents in exchange for being the major-domo of their farm, joined us for coffee. "Prince Romanoff" had just been in a fight, and Kent was preparing to help him when he appeared before a court in a few days. I could hardly believe that Rockwell was actually taking this fake prince to Ausable Forks. He told me it was because the prince knew how to do everything: cook, garden, clean, and exercise the horses. In addition, he is a brilliant conversationalist.

José Clemente Orozco has arrived in New York. He is still having a difficult time financially. There is an extraordinary woman by the name of Alma Reed, who has a gallery called the "Delphic Studios!" She is going to sponsor Orozco. Mrs. Reed originally came from California, and I'm afraid she carried with her some of the mystic ailments that sometimes befall the people out there. Mrs. Reed is a very fat woman, and wears long black dresses, but she has the face and hands of a Madonna! She belongs to a secret Greek order called the Delphic Society. (I only hope that she concentrates on selling Orozco's work!)

The other night she invited me to one of the meetings of the Delphic Society. A Mrs. Hambridge, the wife of the man who is supposed to have discovered Dynamic Symmetry (a system of drawing in mathematical forms) was there, dressed in white veils, and she wore Greek sandals. The rest of the people (all women) wore long chains with Greek crosses. The lights were dimmed—and the discussion of "Art on a Higher Plane" commenced. I was really frightened.

When Mrs. Reed talks, she waves her hands in the air and the words go up and down, all according to the dramatic incident she is recalling. The most dramatic part of her life was her engagement to Felipe Carrillo Puerto, the martyred Communist Governor of the State of Yucatan, Mexico. But in spite of her foolishness, Mrs. Reed has a rare quality. No matter what cause she is devoted to, she makes the most of every moment in order to arrive at some climax. She is determined that Orozco will paint a fresco in New York, that his genius will be recognized, and that with his recognition Diego Rivera will fall into oblivion.

New York, November 28, 1930

I have been married a year today! Mama Freeman, in wishing me happiness, told me an old Hebrew proverb, something about "if the grass does not grow green at first, the leaves and the earth from the storms that follow will in the end make each blade greener." She is a simple, kindly woman, with much love for her children, and now that her husband is losing his fortune, her bewilderment is as great as when he suddenly made it. As far as Joe is concerned, she never ceases to worry over his political activities.

How I wish that he would just be a writer! I think if Joe knew more about his own country it would decrease his tension concerning outside events.

Orozco has come to dinner several times with Mrs. Reed. It looks as though he's going to paint a fresco in the New School for Social Research. I can see how hurt he is that Diego already has a large commission in San Francisco to paint the Stock Exchange there. It delights Joe that Rivera has fallen "low enough" to paint a Stock Exchange.

One feels the Spanish in Orozco more than the Indian (which is the blood that predominates in Diego). Orozco is very much concerned about the general strikes that have been recurring in Spain. He hopes the monarchy will fall. Joe told us

that the Russian movie director, Serge Eisenstein, is on his way to America. He will go on to Hollywood to make a picture for Paramount.

New York, December 10, 1930

Zohmah Day, whom you wrote to me about, arrived in New York a few days ago. I suggested she enroll in the Art Students' League. These last weeks I have been working hard. I have done several drawings for the *Herald Tribune* Book Review, as well as a lithograph of Sinclair Lewis, who has just received the Nobel Prize; I am to be included with eight other painters in the first exhibition of a new gallery of modern art that is being opened by Marie Harriman around the end of this month. I should be happy with all of this sudden success, but my physical strength doesn't keep up with the energy I have in "my head and hands." I have a constant pain in my left lung, where they took away the fluid. The doctor says I ought to go away for the winter and not risk getting sick again in this cold weather. I may have to ask you to let me stay with you for the cold months; even if I win a scholarship, it won't be of much use if I can't store up strength. When I made the drawing of Mr. Lewis I had to take the train out to his country house. I was all in when I arrived, but the afternoon and the trip back were so amusing I forgot how tired I was.

I made the drawing in his study, while Mr. Lewis wrote out checks to pay his bills with the Nobel Prize, and there were freshly-written checks all over the desk and the floor. I would have liked to paint him in that foreground of blue paper, which only increased the redness of his face and hair. He looked just like a carrot.

In a basket beside his desk there was a tiny baby with a wisp of red hair on the top of its head. Each time Mr. Lewis would finish a check, he would talk to the baby: "Isn't it wonderful, Michael, that Daddy has won the Nobel Prize?" I had an awful time making the drawing because he was never still, but his face

had made such an impression the moment I saw it that the drawing was fairly successful.

On the train back to New York Mr. Lewis joked a great deal about receiving the prize and the fuss that it had created throughout the country, especially among other contemporary writers. He told me how mad Theodore Dreiser was . . . and then he added that Dreiser ought to be tinting "fish plates." I didn't get the connection, and I don't think there was any, as Mr. Lewis had had about ten highballs!

Later in the week Mrs. Durant (who made it possible for me to get the *Tribune* portraits to do) took me to dinner at the Lewis apartment down on Tenth Street. Serge Eisenstein was there, with Tisse, his cameraman, and Alexandroff, his assistant director. The Russians were dressed in dinner jackets; they were terribly enthusiastic over New York, especially Harlem and the night clubs.

Dorothy Thompson, a newspaper woman whom Mr. Lewis recently married, was very beautiful and charming. They are sailing in a few days for Norway. Eisenstein is going out to Hollywood. I told him he ought to go to Mexico instead. I have always imagined that movies should be made there, the light is so clear.

New York, January 15, 1931

I have made reservations to come home. I have got to get out of this cold. It's a pity to leave New York, as I have had such a good start this winter. The critics wrote pleasing comments on my work, both at the Harriman Gallery and the Delphic Studios (Alma Reed included me in a Mexican show, which I felt was quite an honor, since I am not a Mexican). Orozco is at last painting on a wall, his first fresco in almost fifteen years. He has caused quite a storm. Some people say he is painting Soviet propaganda. This is not true, as Orozco is a cynic as far as politics are concerned; at the moment the only person who really excites him is Gandhi (I think Mrs. Reed might have influenced him in that). I still don't know what to think of the fresco. The

compositions are flat to the point of being two-dimensional; the room is small—one's eye does not travel "into the wall." What he has painted hits one right in the face. But the emotional quality is the thing that Orozco has: whatever he paints arouses one's imagination. Rivera fails completely to do this. I wanted to work with Orozco, helping him with this wall, but I haven't the strength, and the room is so damp, with the wet plaster. On the afternoons I spend with him, he talks about the troubles inside Spain. He is convinced the monarchy will fall. In the last month Madrid has been "bombed" with manifestoes by a famous Spanish aviator, Ramon Franco, urging a Republic. Orozco is convinced that Premier Berenguer and the King will go, even though they have made violent attempts to stop these Republican outbreaks by sending its leaders to prison and into exile. It seems that all parties—monarchists, socialists, conservative leaders, as well as foreign diplomats, are blaming Alfonso for the ruthless dictatorship that exists inside Spain. Orozco is the first Mexican I have known to be so concerned over Spain.

New York, March 31, 1931

Tonight I am leaving for Mexico City. I have not written to you since my return to New York and the awarding of the Guggenheim Fellowship. There is much to tell.

You will remember how unhappy I was the day the letter arrived in California, telling me that I had won this scholarship. You gave me the letter when I was sitting in the garden with Mary, wondering what I should do about my life. I don't know whether to blame or to thank you for influencing me in my decision about Joe. I have no idea what you wrote to him, nor what he answered, during my stay with you. I suppose it all hinged on money. You were angry that I was a burden to you during those six weeks; and he was angry at having to contribute towards my living. Well, that is all over. I can look after myself for the next year!

But this is not the real core of things. During my stay with

you, I began to feel that I was a burden to Joe because my health could not stand up to that life in New York, nor cope with the strain of his "revolutionary activities." Each letter he wrote made me feel that he was bound to walk into a fire—and that I had not the strength to follow. I felt this with all my heart, because out west I was content just doing stupid things. When I wrote to him about the mountains and the sun and the new planet that fell across the sky this spring, his letters were full of resentment; some of it, of course, is justified, because I had gone away. What I always wanted was to go away with him, somewhere where he would write and forget about re-making the world. I know now that this was a silly thought of mine, because the thing that he wants more than anything else is to be identified with the struggle of the people.

When I returned to New York, I didn't let him know I was coming. I wanted to surprise him. The train was ahead of schedule. I arrived at the apartment around breakfast time. Joe was having breakfast with a Russian named Pilnyak, whom he introduced to me as one of the greatest of contemporary writers. They were drinking vodka for breakfast. To celebrate my return, I had a glass. I felt very gay, with vodka so early in the morning. But later, when I started to unpack, I found a few pieces of clothing in my closet, including several nightgowns, which were not mine. I was furious. Joe's explanation—that it was some "comrade who had just arrived from London"—did not sound convincing. Anyway, I went away to a hotel without unpacking. The next day Joe came to see me with a tall, dark woman, who offered me a bouquet of violets!

That night Rebecca Drucker gave a party for me, to celebrate the award. Louis Fischer, a writer who had just arrived in New York from Moscow, was there. I had never seen him before, although I had heard how brilliant he was from Joe.

I was in the kitchen helping to prepare the salad when Mr. Fischer came in for a glass of water. He looked at the way I was cutting the tomatoes and asked me to slice them in a different direction, or he couldn't eat them! That was my first conversa-



tion with Mr. Fischer. It didn't make me mad, but I did wonder how he lived among the Soviets if he is so fussy.

Later in the evening, with the party in full swing, Mr. Fischer stood up, clapped his hands, and ordered the music to stop. He began to make a regular speech, as though the room were an auditorium. He denounced me for taking money from a capitalistic Foundation. He said that if I accepted the Guggenheim money I would disgrace my husband. He said that Joe was a symbol to thousands of people, that his life was of real value to the success of Communism, and that I was nothing in comparison to him.

When he finished speaking, no one said a word. I looked at Joe, sulking in the corner, his head bent towards the floor. I waited for him to say something. When he didn't, I walked towards the door. Mr. Fischer looked at me with the contented eyes of a pugilist when he knocks out his opponent in the first round. I wanted to cry, and then I said:

"I have never seen Mr. Fischer before, and he has never seen me, nor does he know my worth as a human being. Just now he has told you that my husband is of greater value to the world than I am. I suppose that might be true, if one believed the only thing worth while in life was being a Communist. But I want to be a painter. I need to study and work, and I don't see how this will hurt my husband . . ."

There was no use saying any more; Joe's continued silence finished whatever else I could say. I left the party given in my honor.

A few hours later Joe came to find me. He looked rather comical with his hat pulled down over his eyes and a large basket of fruit in one hand. He held out the basket. I took it and threw the first thing that came into my hand . . . a large pineapple. It hit him very hard, and he walked away.

In the morning I tried to have my scholarship changed to Italy: I never wanted to see Mexico again. But Mr. Crowninshield begged me to be sensible, and I gave in when Mr. Moe of the Foundation told me that I was selected, with a few other

people, as the first Fellows to be sent to Latin America. I asked who else was going. I nearly fainted when he told me Carleton Beals was one!

You can imagine how I feel going back. The train leaves in a few hours.

## CHAPTER XI

Coyocan, Mexico, April 10, 1931

Dearest Mother:

Forgive me for not writing sooner. My telegram at least assured you that I arrived safely in Mexico City. The trip lasted just long enough to bring me into the city on Easter eve.

There is no use in making myself more miserable by writing of the emotions I felt crossing our country and returning here. I suppose every woman who separates from her husband has to bolster up her pride (believing she has gained something through the experience of her failure to live her life out with the man she promised to love forever) . . . If I had actually fallen out of love with Joe, then these hours alone would be different. But I still love him, and I still believe that marriage should be the most important of human relations. I still believe, too, that it calls for the greatest responsibilities. When one loves, one longs to feel important. I realized, after the first weeks of married life, that I was not the most important thing to my husband. His purpose in living did not depend on his love for me. Perhaps if I had become a Communist this would have solved our problem. But alas, I never felt convinced or remotely drawn into his faith. And faith of any kind cannot be forced into one's heart. That last night at Becky's was too much of an anticlimax. I felt utterly betrayed when I left him sitting there, content in self-pity. . . .

Four hours before we entered the capital, three Mexicans boarded the train at Queretaro. They had been hunting, but in spite of their beards and untidy clothing and dusty boots, I could tell they were what you would call gentlemen, and near my own age.

Traveling on Mexican trains is always an experience. The dining car consists of four tables, which passengers must share . . . so that was how I met Enrique, Pablo, and Tacho. The conductor, a man with long, black mustaches and an enormous gold watch chain, tried to act the part of host, introducing me

to them before I sat down to dinner. It was a gay dinner, in spite of my bad Spanish. When we arrived at the capital, the conductor and these three men took me in a taxi to the Hotel Regis. Enrique, the most quiet and handsome of the lot, suggested we all have lunch on Easter. I accepted, because I didn't want to be alone with my memories. . . .

I got up early Easter morning, even though I was tired from the long train ride. I walked down the Avenida Juarez, past the Alameda, towards the Cathedral. Easter is always beautiful, no matter where one may be; it is the thought of what that day represents that fills one with peace and a renewed faith in life. It almost seemed an omen that I had come back to this country on Easter, and I felt secure in finding the Alameda, in the clear sunlight, just as beautiful as I had remembered it during the long summer days with Joe. The grass under the tall Alamos trees is just as green, and there are still the tiny white daisies growing in the grass. And the Indian photographers with their "magic boxes" are there, too, waiting to take your picture. They were arranging the wooden horses, Charo hats, and pistols. They called after me, but I was anxious to arrive at the Cathedral.

I entered the Cathedral from the Zocalo. It was bitter cold inside. I knelt in front of the *Alter de Perdon*, watching the faces of the Indians, lighted by the candles they held in their hands. The poverty of those Indians was pathetic alongside the people dressed in Easter finery.

I looked at the large canvas of the Apocalypse, painted by the Colonial artist, Juan Correa, and the Madonna head by Murillo that hangs just over the Archbishop's seat. And then I went out into the sunlight. I never know what to do in church, because I am actually a heathen (you should have baptized me into something). I don't know a single prayer, and I wanted so much to pray this Easter. . . .

In the afternoon I had lunch with Enrique, Pablo, Tacho, and the train conductor, in Xochimilco, a beautiful little village of canals and floating gardens. We ate *mole* (a reddish Mexican curry) in a tree! It was an enormous tree on a single island. A

winding staircase had been built around the trunk, and where the branches forked the Indians had built a table and tacked seats to the branches!

There were so many toasts of tequila, I don't know how any of us managed to sit in the tree without falling to the ground below! The conductor and Pablo could speak English, and they were kept busy translating the conversation back and forth to Enrique and Tacho. I found out that all three were lawyers. I began to think about a divorce (so far I haven't gotten very far in explaining to Enrique why I want one). My story sounds too involved. But I hope in the next weeks to make some progress. It ought to be easy to get a divorce in Mexico.

The day after Easter I had to report to the Guggenheim office. Mr. Eyler Simpson, whom I met in 1929, is in charge of the Fellows. He was glad to see me. While we were talking Carleton Beals came into the office. Carleton asked me where I was going to live. I told him I didn't know, but that I wanted to get out of the city, away from people. He said that he wanted to do the same thing, and suggested that we hire a taxi and drive out to Coyocan to look for a place.

Mr. Simpson's office is in front of the National Palace. I couldn't resist walking over there with Carleton, before we hired a taxi. The fresco is much the same as when I left Mexico. I doubt if Diego has worked on a single section since that hectic summer. While we were standing near the stairway a tall, handsome man spoke to us. He introduced himself as Victor Arnautoff. He said that he knew who I was and that he was a painter, too, working at the moment on the Palace wall while Diego was in California. He asked me if I would like to help him fill in some of the large "sky areas" on the west wall. At first I didn't want to go near that wall, but to have a fresco brush in my hand again was too much of a temptation, and so next week I'm going to work with Mr. Arnautoff.

At the moment, I'm sitting in an empty house in Coyocan writing to you. It is such a beautiful house, with two gardens and a terrace of red tiles. Carleton rented the twin to it next

door. I'm glad to have him near me. Neither of us speaks about the past. He is going to work on a biography of Porfirio Diaz.

Coyocan, April 20, 1931

In this village Cuauhtemoc, the last prince of the Aztecs, was taken prisoner, tortured, and forced to reveal the place where Montezuma had hidden his treasure. Also, this village was the first seat of the Spanish Crown in New Spain. Cortez built his palace here in Coyocan—and today it is still used as a municipal building.

For nearly ten days I have been trying to get rid of the fleas and bedbugs in my house. I've poured gallons of kerosene on the floors, but at night when I turn out the lights there is never a moment's sleep! I love the house so much, I'm determined to battle these pests to the bitter end.

I bought my furniture in the Merced market with Carleton—simple Indian things, carried all the way out here on the heads of Indians. It was really a funny sight watching the beds and chairs come down the street on the heads of about ten Indians, trotting in single file. So far, I have spent all my time painting my house and planting flowers in the garden. I found an old Indian to help me with the planting. I told him (in my broken Spanish) that I wanted things that would grow quickly. He divided the ground into beautiful pie-shaped plots. The following week I noticed tiny green blades . . . and when I asked what sort of extraordinary grass this was, I found that my Indian had planted the entire yard in garlic!

I have found a servant, an Indian girl named Concha; she is sixteen and so small, it seems that I have a child of ten working for me. Concha is so dumb that this is almost true. Her family live on what they call the *Pedregal* (the lava flow) a few blocks west of this house. The lava flow extends for miles. It is the most sinister phenomenon I have ever seen. They say it is older than the memory of man. The lava rises up from the earth to a height of about fifty feet. Its surface has enormous craters, where de-

posits of earth make fertile spots in which some plants flourish. Usually one can find Indians living in these holes (that's where I found Concha, the day I explored the *Pedregal*). She had never seen a bed, let alone clean white sheets. I'm really having an experience with her!

Carleton as yet has bought no knives and forks nor cooking utensils of any kind, and I'm afraid that he likes eating in my house so much that he'll never completely furnish his own. I don't mind, because he helps me to learn Spanish.

The newspapers have given us long interviews; they carried my picture, standing on a balcony, with the caption: "California returns to Mexico." One reporter, who had seen my lithograph of Sinclair Lewis, asked me if it was true that such men as "Babbitt" lived in our country!

A few days ago Carleton advised me to change my American dollars into gold. For some unknown reason I delayed, and the following day Mexico went off the gold standard! Poor Mr. Beals lost a frightful amount of his scholarship money!

Coyocan, April 28, 1931

I am living a most regulated life. I have so much to do that there is little time to think of the heartache I feel. Yet it is really there. I still love Joe, in spite of all that has happened. I can't help it. I love him, but I hate his life, and I know he would be unhappy here in this house with me. I have received letters from him. He writes that you two have been together, and that he is staying in California with that Russian writer, Pilnyak. His letters are beautiful. They are full of poetry about the palm and eucalyptus trees and the blue Pacific. Nevertheless, I'm going to divorce him, though not with the ill feeling most people seek divorce. I feel no hate or resentment. I want him to be free, to walk his way through life doing the things he believes in, just as I want to be free to do what is in my heart. Perhaps because I am still so young I love the world more than any single cause. I am honest when I say this to you. Joe loves the

world, too, but he wants to change it, while I just "need it" to live in, as it is. It all seems so wonderful, even the things that are not right, because I'm learning through them the direction that I will follow forever.

I even learn much more by talking to Concha than from any of those ladies back in New York. Concha is a marvel. The other day I asked her to make some tea. After some time had passed I went into the kitchen (it is very primitive, with a charcoal fire). Concha stood there like a dark little witch, stirring a large pot of water. She had dumped the entire package of tea into a pot of cold water!

I go into the city early each morning and work on the Palace wall until four in the afternoon. Mr. Arnautoff lives in Coyocan, too; it is pleasant riding back and forth with him. He has so many children and household chores to do. . . . When we finish painting at the Palace and return home, I spend the hours of daylight that are left caring for the garden. This chore takes much patience, as there is no running water, and Concha and I must carry endless buckets of water from the well into the garden in order to keep the flowers and vegetables alive. There will be no rain until the summer comes.

Cooking dinner is another tedious job. We have to fan the fire constantly. Fanning the fire before dinner is when I do my reading.

Enrique Correa comes often to dinner. He thinks my life is the funniest thing he has ever known. Enrique is from a very old Spanish family. He has the title of Count. These old families of Mexico don't like the Indian tradition of this country. They still try to ignore it, and live in the past. Enrique, although he is young, might just as well be living at the time of Maximilian. He looks at my Indian furniture with a critical eye, afraid to sit on the cot from the Merced market because it is still full of fleas. I argue with him that all of Mexico is full of fleas. He insists that his house hasn't any.

The other night Enrique brought me a big pistol and a cartridge belt (the kind Pancho Villa wore). He loaded the



pistol, keeping one cartridge blank, explaining to me how dangerous it is to live in this way in the country, even though Concha stays in the house at night. Now that Carleton has gone off collecting material for his Diaz book, I do feel a bit uneasy!

The other day I bought a beautiful police dog from an Indian. Three days later he returned with his entire family. They were all in tears and wanted the dog back. When the wife held out her hand, with all of my pesos intact, I felt at once what a sacrifice it must have been for these poor people not to spend that money, and so I gave them their dog, and told them to keep my pesos! One rarely sees such devotion!

The other day Mr. Arnautoff gave me his dog, Tushca. He said she was a nuisance. Tushca has already won my heart. When I come home she runs for a chair, sits in it, holds out her paw, and looks at me with such love. Really, animals know how to cheer one up! I feel better having her around. The village is very dark at night; the only protection is the sound of the policeman's whistle (an old Spanish custom) which I think is silly, because if a robber were prowling about, the whistle would only be a warning for him, and certainly of no help to his victim!

Enrique doesn't like it that I work at the Palace, and that I wear overalls. He has been trying his best—with the aid of a dictionary—to explain to me the other half of Mexican history. His ideas on the Revolution are just the opposite from Rivera's. In spite of his good manners, my sympathy is for the people. He tells me that it is useless to try to educate the Indians. Enrique says they were really happy living their life under the Diaz regime. He points to Concha as an example of the futility of it all.

Coyocan, May 15, 1931

I never imagined, when I suggested to Zohmah Day to come to Mexico, that she would actually do it. The other night when

I came home from the Palace I found a telegram saying that she had arrived in Vera Cruz and was stranded there without a penny. I went immediately to Enrique's office. He called someone long-distance at the Ward Line in Vera Cruz to find Zohmah, but they could not locate her. You can imagine how worried I was.

By the time we returned to Coyocan, there was Zohmah sitting in the living room, with a long string of white gardenias around her neck, laughing and talking to several men. One, a Mr. Villaseñor, tried to explain what had happened to Zohmah. Mr. Villaseñor introduced himself as a former Vice-Consul from London. He said that this was his first trip home in years and that he had been a passenger on the boat from New York with Zohmah. When the boat arrived in Vera Cruz, Zohmah's money gave out. He offered to bring her on to the capital, provided she would play a practical joke with him and pose as his wife! And so this "little girl" that you ask me to look out for arrives in Mexico City as the wife of Mr. Villaseñor! She had a great reception with photographers at the station!

After explaining this, Mr. Villaseñor introduced me to his friend, Dr. Rossi, a bird-like man with a tiny mouth and a waxed mustache. Dr. Rossi is an "animal specialist" from France. He has come to Mexico to make a study of cattle and horses.

Coyocan, May 23, 1931

Zohmah has been with me over a week. We are sleeping together on the cot, as I have had no time to buy another, and she's afraid to go out alone. She has some skin trouble on her hands; at night they are smeared with medicine and she wears white gloves to bed! She's a very lazy girl. I leave her sleeping every morning. When I come home I find her writing a "diary" about her "primitive" life in Mexico. . . . Really, Mother, this is all your fault!

I received a nice letter from Freddie Oechsner. He's in Berlin and seems to have a good job. He read that I was here. I

don't know how I managed to get into the German newspapers! What Freddie said about Germany is interesting. He said Germany is a welter of political and social contradictions, not at all as it was before the war. Even the people are different, he thinks, though their material interests are the same: beer, home, music, military pomp, ponderous philosophy, ridiculous servility. But he said he liked them better than the French. He told me Germany is one huge foundry now, in spite of their defeat, which forecasts something gigantic and powerful. He thinks France is aware of this, also Poland and Russia. He said also that the Communist Party was the third largest in Germany, and wondered whether I was sympathetic to that cause naturally or by persuasion. He thinks the Russian Communists are different from any other Communists anywhere. He went on to say he hoped to go to Russia as a Liberal, appreciating constructive effort, no matter how it is achieved, provided the means are intelligent. He doesn't seem to care much for German Communists, and believes stupidity to be more dangerous than violence.

Freddie's letter interests me, because in Mexico there is such a strong German influence, mostly supported by such families as Enrique's. They hate the United States with the same fury that they hate the Soviets. Certainly it seems to me there are two new conceptions of life working their way to power in Latin America (as well as in the rest of the world) today.

Miss Drucker writes that she's coming to Mexico with her husband. I invited them to visit me, so I'll have to go to the market for more beds! Miss Drucker is still upset about my farewell party. Mr. Crowninshield wrote to me. He thinks I showed courage in coming back here. He is such a friend.

Coyocan, May 25, 1931

Excitement again! Rivera returned from California. Frieda was so mad that I was working on the Palace that she sent word that if I continued, she would kill me! Mr. Arnautoff told me

that when Mexican women were jealous, they were like wild women and did almost anything. He said that Rivera still blamed me for his expulsion from the Communist Party! And he advised me to stop work at the Palace!

Ramon Alba, Diego's old assistant, tried to comfort me. He is mad at Diego at the moment, because he claims he has never received the money he earned in the past year, working for Rivera. Ramon has started a law suit. I really don't take any of this drama seriously. Frieda is silly to be jealous, and Diego knows in his heart that I had nothing to do with his expulsion. Nevertheless, I want peace. I am determined to stay out of politics! These last days I have been working at home.

Jean Charlot, a Frenchman who was a member of the old Syndicate of Painters, and whom I respect and admire as an artist, is working in my studio. Charlot tried for the Guggenheim this year. He should have won it; but I feel that I am sharing mine with him, as I pay for all the models and feed him as well these days. He is the saddest man I have ever seen. I've tried to persuade Zohmah to go out with him; they would make a good pair with their lack of energy. Charlot is just recovering from his love for Anita Brenner, who is another Guggenheim Fellow and who has recently arrived from New York. Anita was born in Mexico, but her parents are Jewish. She is a brilliant writer. Charlot was a real inspiration in helping her with *Idols Behind Altars*, a book on Mexican Art.

I have painted a good canvas of a little girl in a red dress.

Coyocan, June 1, 1931

I'm still having a time with Zohmah. She sits all day writing in her diary. I've worked so hard to make this house "civilized" that I resent her writing about her primitive life.

Every Sunday Enrique and his friends take us to the bull-fights—not the real fights, because it's summertime. Enrique is an expert on bullfighting. The first Sunday he took us to see this sport he was mad because Zohmah wanted to sit on the benches

at the very top of the arena. Even then she was in hysterics, and we had to leave after the second bull. I didn't want to leave, in spite of what happened to the horses. I was completely carried away by the movements of the matador and the tenseness of the crowd watching the fight.

I have never seen a crowd of people so completely cruel. One poor matador could not kill his bull at the first, second, or third try. This is a disgrace. He was barely twenty years old. He stood there in front of the bull crying, the poor animal covered with blood and ready to collapse from exhaustion. The crowd rose from their seats and threw their pillows, beer-bottles, and whatever else they could find directly at the matador. Finally he managed to kill the bull and left the ring, sobbing like a baby. Enrique was furious, Zohmah was fainting, and I felt guilty that I could have looked at all of this with cold wonder.

My friendship with Enrique gives me a real chance to know the "aristocratic side of Mexican life." We do the same things every Sunday. In the morning I play tennis in a country club, where all the girls have their chaperones, sour-looking old ladies dressed in black. I feel so self-conscious that all the fun is taken out of the game. These Mexican girls "pat the ball" as though they were playing shuttlecock. Usually we have lunch at the Club. Every girl sits at the table with a circle of eyes surrounding her, and the conversation never goes above petty gossip! In the evening after the bullfights we play dominoes. This is Sunday in Mexico, with the "real Spaniards!" I'm glad I'm an American. I would simply burst out of here if I had to live such a life permanently.

Mr. Villaseñor comes often to see us. He wants to be a poet instead of a diplomat. The other night I had dinner with him, and he showed me his "works," all bound in finely tooled leather. I could tell by the bindings on his poems that he would never suffer through the task of being a true poet! But I am certain he will be an unusual diplomat, because he has such love for painting and all creative work.

Dr. Rossi brought a French-Mexican friend of his to meet me,

because I told him I liked horses. I was lucky to meet this Mr. Pugibet, who wears a Vandyke beard and the Legion of Honor insignia. He owns some of the finest horses in Mexico. I have gone riding with him several times, and I was fool enough to risk jumping over a barrier of maguey plants!

Mr. Pugibet says he is fascinated with me because I ride like a boy . . . what he really likes is my blond hair and blue eyes! He is very rich, and very religious. His father built a church, and there is a statue of him at the entrance of a park, bearing his name. You can see that I am staying away from the Communists!

Coyocan, June 24, 1931

I have just returned from two of the maddest weeks I have ever lived through. What happened is really something I will remember all my life. At least it's a good story, and every bit of it is true.

Adolphe Best-Maugard came to see me in Coyocan with a young American who had come down to Mexico to act as business manager for a motion picture that Serge Eisenstein is making. The money for the production belongs to Mrs. Upton Sinclair. It seems that the Russians did not make a success of their stay in Hollywood. They turned up in Mexico with Mrs. Sinclair's money and the idea to film a picture here.

At first they encountered trouble with the present government. They were sent to jail, but finally wangled permission to make the film, under strict censorship. Mr. Best-Maugard was assigned the job of supervising the film, on behalf of the Mexican government. He told me that Eisenstein would like me to come down to the Pulque Hacienda of Tetlapayac, in the state of Hidalgo, to watch the shooting of the picture. Mr. Best returned to Tetlapayac, leaving the young manager in the city to buy food supplies.

The following night, in a heavy rainstorm, he and I boarded the train at the Buena Vista station for the Hacienda. We

traveled second class, with a mess of duffel bags filled with food. The car was jammed with Indians carrying chickens, turkeys, bundles of vegetables, flowers, and babies. The business manager dragged the duffel bags outside the car, and we sat on top of them, trying to get a bit of fresh air. He told me frankly what he thought of Mexico, Mexicans, and the Russians! He was fed up with the food and the climate, and above all things, having to stay with the Russians.

The only thing he was not fed up with was tequila and beer. While we sat on the duffel bags he emptied bottle after bottle of 3X and Montezuma beer, in between straight shots of tequila! As I watched him become gay and irresponsible, I was glad I hadn't let him take my pistol! He tried to convince me, before we left Coyocan, that we should take the pistol. He said that it was dangerous to go into the country at night unarmed.

He told me a very disconnected story about the Pulque Hacienda. He claimed that the family who owned Tetlapayac represented one of the last feudal clans of Mexico. He said that they had had continual trouble with the Agrarians, but somehow managed to keep most of their property.

We arrived at the station of Tetlapayac around midnight. The manager dumped the bags from the car. When the train pulled out I found myself standing in the middle of a vast plain of maguey plants. It had stopped raining, the stars were bright, and there was just enough of a moon to make the countryside visible in the night. At first it seemed that no one was there to meet us. My companion was nervous. He called out into the darkness and finally we heard footsteps coming towards the adobe station.

A tall, handsome Mexican, clean-shaven, with blue eyes, dressed in a golden charo suit with tiny silver owls down the pant-legs, walked towards us. When he held out his hand, I counted two pistols, one rifle, and six heavily filled cartridge belts hanging on Don Julio Saldivar! He looked like a walking arsenal. I would have been nervous if I had not seen the young girl who came tripping up behind him, in high heels, satin

pajamas, and a long string of beads around her neck. Saldivar introduced "Lupe" as one of the leads in the picture.

Several Indians carried the duffel bags over to a small wagon. This wagon looked like an old-fashioned tramcar. It stood on a narrow track and was drawn by six mules. When the driver cracked the whip, the mules started off at a fast pace across the maguey plain.

The manager now felt very gay. He opened another box of Montezuma and uncorked a bottle of tequila. Everyone took a drink and listened to my companion hum *Rancho Grande*. Finally Don Julio whispered in my ear, "Señorita, don't be frightened if you hear pistol shots. I am afraid we are going to be attacked on the way to the Hacienda!" He gave his pistols a gentle tap, and added, "If any shooting begins, just lie low in the bottom of the car. Probably nothing will happen . . . but on the other hand it might. We have had a lot of trouble with a band of Agrarians!"

I was so frightened I could hardly reply. Don Julio looked at me and then he started to laugh. "Don't be afraid," he whispered. "It is all a joke. There will be some shooting in a minute, but it is not a real attack. I've planned the whole thing with the Russians, to frighten your friend (pointing to the manager). None of us like him, and we thought if we scared him tonight, he would go back to the States."

The manager stood up in the car, staggering over the duffel bags towards the driver's seat. He slapped the Indian on the back and said, "Who wants a Rolls Royce when a mule can run like this, and without a bit of noise!" He pulled at my arm. He wanted me to look at the mules, but I was afraid. I thought, suppose this is the real thing. Suppose Saldivar passed it off as a joke only to keep me quiet. . . . There wasn't time to think any more. From out of the darkness came the whizzing, bursting noise of rifle fire. Saldivar pushed everyone to the floor of the car. The Indians grabbed rifles. Saldivar crawled towards the back of the car, catching my hair in his spurs. He emptied round after round of shells. The shattering glass from the window cut



the business manager's hand. He was certain he had been shot, and fell to the floor, crying like a baby. The mules kept on running. Lupe, the "lead," became hysterical. She shouted in Spanish, "They will kill us all!" I was too frightened to do anything except lie on the floor, pulling at the duffel bags.

Suddenly the firing stopped and there was a dead silence. Saldivar took the reins from the driver. "We'll make it, it's only another hundred yards to the gates; but I am afraid they have circled to the south gate of the Hacienda. As soon as we enter, run for the house, tell them to turn out the lights, and arm themselves!"

The mules kept trotting almost to the door of the Hacienda, which was an enormous building, spread out in great squares, with a long stairway leading to the entrance. I jumped from the car, running up the stairs with my "friend," shouting, directly behind me. He was holding his bleeding hand and Lupe, crying, held on to my coat. I half dragged her into the house.

Inside the door, the manager collapsed to the floor. No one moved in the room. Alexandroff (the assistant director) sat at the piano, playing and singing some melancholy song. Eisenstein lay calmly on a Victorian sofa, dressed in an American milkman's overalls. He was chewing on an apple and drawing on yellow typewriting paper—illustrations for *Lady Macbeth! Tisse*, the cameraman, was reading a book. I still didn't know whether the whole thing was a joke, but certainly what had happened to the young business manager was not!

I could hear Saldivar shouting from the courtyard below, "Turn out the lights, we've been attacked!" Eisenstein threw down his apple, jumped up, and started to drag the furniture to the windows. The Russians barricaded the room like a street in Petrograd! When they had stacked the last chair against the window, Eisenstein calmly said, "Well, that is enough," and went back to his drawing.

In the morning when the manager had sobered up, no one could convince him that this whole thing had been a joke. He took the next train back to Mexico City, made an official protest

to the government, and annoyed the American Ambassador into demanding an investigation. Eisenstein finally got into trouble not only with the government, but in the end he rowed with Saldivar, who claimed that the Russians destroyed part of the Hacienda in their "fire" scene. The leading man actually killed his cousin and was sent to jail; Saldivar's wife sued for a divorce, because of Lupe; and the business manager . . . he finally packed up and returned to California! Mrs. Sinclair wired for the production to stop, demanding that the Russians hand over their equipment. The Mexican government confiscated the film, and after running it off, decided it was an insult to the Mexican Revolution, protesting officially through our Embassy to the U.S.S.R.

At the moment the Russians are having a good time loafing in Mexico City. They are buying lots of cameras and English clothing before returning to their country. I could tell you a dozen other stories of what happened during my stay on that Hacienda. It was certainly thunder over Mexico!

Coyocan, July 20, 1931

These last ten days I had my first chance to see "American capital" exploiting the Mexican Indian. I have just returned from one of the largest sugar haciendas in this country; it is one of the sore spots of the labor leaders in Mexico. I was invited there by the daughter of the owner, a beautiful American girl who was born and raised in this country. Her father was once the American Consul of the city of Puebla, and he reminded me of Mussolini, both in physical appearance and in his tremendous energy and drive, which never seem to leave him in a state of fatigue.

His daughter, Elizabeth, is the same. I made a great effort to keep up with her, through my curiosity to see with my own eyes an exploiter from my own country at work in Mexico!

The hacienda, on which the refining and actual making of the sugar is done, is situated in the heart of the State of Puebla.

The country in this section is flat and fertile, surrounded by high mountains. The days are scorching hot, the nights bitter cold. The main building consists of a long, rambling, two-story structure, with arches running the entire length of the façade. These arches are the only "friendly" detail in the architecture. Even the patio has a hostile, cruel appearance, accentuated by a straight cement walk down the center and carelessly kept gardens on either side. This cement walk runs directly into the dining room, which is filled with wooden tables and straight chairs. The atmosphere is so completely lacking in comfort that I was surprised when we were served icecream for dessert after lunch, which was eaten with the *administrador*, a tall, thin Spaniard, his two sons, and several German engineers. Elizabeth told me her father hated anything fussy. He believed in keeping a hard "front" because that way his employees were more efficient!

At night there was an armed guard of about twenty soldiers stationed at the entrance of the hacienda. The sugar mill kept running night and day. Returning from a day's riding through the fields of sugar cane, the night shift of Indians was always to be found lying on the long cement terrace in front of the house. There were hundreds of them; they scarcely looked like human beings in their tattered clothes and with faces blackened from the burning cane smoke.

When I first "walked over" these Indians in order to pass through the gate into the patio, I felt ashamed. That is all I can say. Elizabeth told me that I should deaden whatever I felt. She said that these people were perfectly happy, and that working conditions in her father's sugar mill were considered the best in all Mexico! She tried hard to explain to me that there was little use in trying to improve conditions beyond those existing now, because these people were so hopelessly backward. She was completely out of sympathy with the agrarian and labor reforms of the government.

During the days I spent on the hacienda I saw enough poverty and misery to spoil each night we slept on our clean Simmons beds. The Indians themselves lived in filthy squalor.

There was one small school. I saw dozens of malaria victims: they would lie on the hot earth, shaking with chills, and at night they were burning with fever. I don't see how half of them had the strength to work in the sugar mill.

One afternoon the Spaniard took me through the mill. I saw the making of sugar from the beginning to the end. There was a game, devised to speed up the storing of the sugar. Each Indian had an iron brand, which he would insert at the top of his cone of sugar. Cheap sugar is made into cones, and is most commonly used by the workers of Mexico. Refined sugar is exported. These workers would run back and forth, each one trying to carry more cones than the next runner, until he would drop from sheer exhaustion, and then be replaced by a fresh opponent!

The only form of amusement they have on Sunday is to pray and get drunk. Their religion is practiced in an abnormal emotional stupor. I cannot forget the faces of the old people, and the young children. There seemed to be no hope for them. I wondered how Elizabeth and her family could enjoy the wealth they had made out of this place. I know I couldn't.

Mexico has a great problem to solve with the Indian. Certainly my trip into this portion of the country, which represents one of the major industries, makes me wonder about the Indians who are doing the actual work in making such industry possible.

I listened to a conference led by Dr. Moises Saenz at the University of Mexico. He claimed that the Revolution had made a mistake in subdividing the land into small portions. He claims that the ancient tradition of these people was to own and cultivate a restricted patch of land, and that the only way they could make progress now was to be incorporated into large-scale farmers. Dr. Saenz believes that the government should sponsor a program of collective farming, giving the Indian use of modern machinery to cultivate the land. It sounds sensible to me, after the days I have spent riding over this section, watching solitary Indians trying to dig into the earth with primitive tools and irrigate the land with a few buckets of water!

Writing to you about these things makes me wonder what

will happen to the new Spanish Republic, where there is much the same problem of giving back the land to the people. I went to hear Julio Alvarez Del Vayo, the new Spanish Ambassador, make a speech in the Preparatoria School a few weeks ago. He was so enthusiastic about the future of his country that I felt, for the first time since the depression, that the world was not full of despondent people. At least not in Spain. What has happened there these last weeks is a step forward in a world that is sunk in confusion. This new Republic has even gone so far as to send as its ambassadors Spain's finest contemporary writers and historians. I think the world needs more artists to help set it right. And fewer politicians!

Don't worry about my work. Everywhere I go I paint. I like working directly from the people and not in a studio. Something is always left behind when I bring a model into the studio. Charlot likes to work (with things in order) and when he is resting, he lies on the cot looking dreamily at his picture. I like to have someone near me while I paint. People who don't know anything about art are always the best critics. What they feel is fresh and unspoiled. They will notice the essential points of a painting and enjoy them. A "lover of art" always becomes involved in academic problems that he has "learned" from some critic!

Coyocan, August 15, 1931

This morning I went into the city to ask Pablo O'Higgins to help me prepare some canvas. We worked all morning on his roof. Bravo, the photographer, came by and asked me to pose for some photos, and then Charlot came panting up the stairs in great excitement. Elie Faure, the French critic, had arrived in Mexico City, on his way to China! Charlot wanted to invite him to tea on Pablo's roof. He sent me to buy some strawberry tarts with Bravo, near the Church of Santo Domingo. When I returned I cleaned Pablo's room and arranged the table for tea. Pablo wanted to make the most of this chance to show his work to a famous French critic.

When Mr. Faure arrived he was so tired from the altitude that he had to rest on Pablo's cot before he could look at the pictures. He went sound asleep, and we were all very nervous waiting for him to wake up. Later when Pablo showed him a large canvas of a "strike," Mr. Faure just said "Very nice" and ate a strawberry tart. I saw at once he was not interested in "revolutionary art."

Mr. Faure wanted to visit Coyocan. I took him home with me, and he was very amused with Concha, and my house. He told me that I had a "sensitive quality" in my drawings, and then he wrote a beautiful inscription in a volume of his own *History of Art* for me.

Coyocan, August 18, 1931

Mr. and Mrs. Bernstein (Rebecca Drucker) have just left Mexico. They stayed with me, enjoying and loving this country, until a disaster occurred. Concha stole a valuable pair of gold earrings from Becky. Enrique took her to jail (in the Palace of Cortez). He tried to make her confess the robbery, but she wouldn't talk, and so finally he set her free, giving us all a long "I told you so" lecture about the unreliable qualities of the Mexican Indian. Now I have no servant; but it doesn't matter, because I'm going off into the country again to paint.

Zohmah's cousin arrived from Salt Lake City. She is a Mormon and a cousin of our present Ambassador, Mr. Rubin Clark, whose son spends most of his time in my house. He is a tall, fat boy of about nineteen, who can never keep his shoes tied. Wherever we take him, he is always having to stop to tie his shoes! His father has given him strict orders as to where he shouldn't go. It spoils our fun, because we have to take him back to the Embassy by ten o'clock at night. The other evening we stayed late at the Lyrico theater, and when we returned to the Embassy he was afraid to ring the bell. I suggested climbing over the wall and sneaking in one of the back doors. The three of us held our hands together, nearly collapsing with his weight. He

lost his balance and fell into the garden on the other side of the wall with such a yell that the guards came running to find out the trouble. I took Zohmah and her cousin by the hand. We made a dash down the Calle Liverpool towards a taxi before the guards could catch up. If they had, how could one explain throwing the Ambassador's son over a wall?

I had my first "serenade." That ended badly, too! Enrique and his friends came around three one morning. We were all sound asleep, and I thought I was dreaming a waltz until I finally woke up and realized the music was not a dream. A few minutes later it stopped. I could hear a frightful argument through the wooden shutters. I took my pistol and opened the shutters just enough to see Enrique being arrested by a policeman. Then I opened them wide, and found the street filled with *Mariaches* (wandering musicians). Enrique asked me if I had any tequila; he told me to offer the policeman a drink. The policeman drank glass after glass of tequila, never returning a glass! He must have stuffed ten glasses into his pocket before he tottered down the street singing to the music of my "serenade." Enrique explained that it is against the law to serenade without a license, but he could not explain the policeman stealing my glasses!

Before the Bernsteins left I tried to find out where my divorce stood in Mexico. Enrique is so charming, vague, and lazy. Mr. Bernstein advised me to get a good, authentic divorce in New York before the year is finished. He told me that Joe had been discharged from *Tass*. This was a shock to me. It seems he had some serious trouble with Mr. Durant.

I accompanied the Bernsteins as far as Vera Cruz: my Spanish is good enough to be of help to tourists. Vera Cruz was terribly hot, and as we arrived in warm woollens, I thought I would never survive the morning. The *Morro Castle* was filled with Americans. They were loaded down with toy horses and bright colored baskets. The Indians on the pier watched the steady stream of basket-laden passengers, walking up the gangplank, with wonder . . . I had a chance to see the Mexican navy. There were

two dilapidated ships from our country, which must have been built during the time of Teddy Roosevelt. The third ship was a French vessel which looked as if it couldn't move without the aid of dynamite! Vera Cruz is an ugly city, but the trip back to the capital is a dream.



## CHAPTER XII

Uruapan, September 1, 1931

I arrived in this charming village of Uruapan at sunset yesterday. It is as though one had traveled a million miles from the capital. The entire landscape has changed. Here in the state of Michoacan the fields are green and filled with wildflowers. The village of Uruapan is built on a steep hill and the houses are constructed of wood, with projecting roofs, underlined with heavy beams. If it were not for the banana trees, one would almost think this was an Austrian village. Even the hotel keeper had the appearance of Franz Josef, with his long white mustaches. He kept bowing as he crossed off the names of the guests on a large pad of paper. I am the only American in the hotel. Aside from Vicente Gonzalez y Gonzalez, lawyer and poet, the rest of the guests are traveling salesmen from Mexico City. Lic. Gonzalez accompanied me on the train; in fact, it was because of his glowing description of this place that I decided to come. Tomorrow he will return to the capital. He has made arrangements for me to live with a family of small landowners and the proprietors of the village store.

I brought with me a good supply of tin. I'm going to make a series of pictures on tin. This is something I learned from the old Spanish Colonial painters. In the National Museum there are beautiful portraits painted on this metal. The surface is smooth and sensitive; the process of painting in this manner is tricky. Nevertheless, I'm going to try it. Also, I brought along Giotto, Fra Angelico, and the *Pientres Siennesis*.

This morning Lic. Gonzalez took me for a long walk and I saw my first "Trascan Indians." The women are very beautiful; they wear heavy woolen skirts that have dozens of pleats in the back. Their necks are covered with strings of coral, and their hair is braided with strands of bright wool. In every hut the women were covering gourds with lacquer. This is one of the principal handicrafts of Uruapan. The work looked fascinating. Each hut was a picture in itself. You can imagine these beauti-

ful women sitting in the sunlight, surrounded by flowers, coloring and carving the gourds, taking their designs from the flowers around them!

Lic. Gonzalez took me to a large *Quinta* that was completely deserted, except for the gatekeeper. There were twelve gardens in the *Quinta*, each one separated by trees and shrubs. One would never expect to find another garden beyond the one which had just been entered. Yet there were twelve gardens, all with individual lakes and entirely different landscaping. The effect was like something out of the Arabian Nights. Lic. Gonzalez is a mystic and one of the strangest Mexicans I have ever known. He is very tall, with a fine Castilian face that looks quite out of place with his light red hair! While we were walking through these gardens, he asked me to sit down near one of the lakes, and he read aloud the poems of Tagore. Can you imagine listening to Tagore beside a lake with swimming white and black swans, and colored birds in the tall magnolia trees overhead?

With all of this beauty, there was something tragic about Lic. Gonzalez. He spoke of his country, explaining to me the exquisite qualities of the Indian, the dignity and the culture of the Spaniards, and the strength from these people that was inherent in the Mexicans of today. He said that the fusion of these two races had made the Revolution a success, and now the future of Mexico would be an example for America, for Europe! Lic. Gonzalez really believes that Mexico is the pivot for new values on this continent. As he lay on the grass, looking so completely Spanish, I could not help imagining him dressed in the armour of a conquistador, and pierced through the heart with three feathers from the bow of Montezuma!

When we returned to the hotel Señor Martinez, landowner and storekeeper, had finally arrived to take me to his sister's house. Señor Martinez has very little Spanish blood in him; his obvious Indian characteristics were only accentuated by his American clothes. He was very fat, with tiny feet, like a woman's, and he carried an enormous black umbrella. He kept pok-

ing the end of it into the sole of his shoe as he smiled and talked to me.

In the evening we all went down the hill to his sister's house. I felt as if I were being taken to a convent, the gathering together of my luggage was such a serious affair, and Señor Martínez patted me so gently on the head when I paid my bill.

When we arrived at his sister's house Señor Martínez pulled a tiny wire that ran down the right-hand side of the doorway. After the door was opened by a small child, the three of us stood alone in the patio. It was spotlessly clean. I began to wonder what his sisters would be like, and if they were prepared to have an artist as a boarder!

Vicente and I sat down on a hard, straight-backed settee. It stood behind a section of the patio that had been glassed in. On each side of the settee were two chairs of the same wood, a shiny spittoon by each chair, and in the corner a radio!

I looked at the white flowerpots with the small green palms, and the bird-cages hanging on wires around the patio; then I asked Vicente if he thought it was really a good idea for me to stay in this place! I began to think of your last letter, Mother dear . . . I am really lonely in spite of the long hours I keep working. But when they are finished I can't help myself: there is still that feeling of emptiness inside. I thought it was better to come here away from the capital. Both of these sisters are good, simple people, one very religious, the other more human and gay. So far we are all under a strain. They want to see everything that I have in my luggage, and I am just as curious to peek into the cabinets in my room. What a room! Purple wallpaper with an all-over design of butterflies. Above my bed, a picture of the Virgin standing on pink clouds!

Uruapan, September 7, 1931

Even though Señorita Maria scrubs her house every morning, I have not been able to sleep a wink! This place is alive with bed-bugs and fleas! Every night I take a box of matches to bed with

me and when the bugs start to bite, I light the matches, trying to catch them. Of course they disappear the moment I strike a match! I even took my mattress out into the patio one morning. Poor Maria, she thinks I'm crazy! Mexican fleas must not bite Mexicans. That is the only possible answer I have to her complete serenity in the morning!

In spite of this, life is good with these two old maids. I am working well. I have painted several heads of a little boy, and now I'm working on a larger study of the same child. I found him one afternoon walking with Maria, on her *tierra*. He belongs to the family of Indians that live on her property. When I first saw this child we were walking down a long hill towards the village. He stood in the tall sugar cane tearing the bottom of his shirt. When he saw us coming he ran down the hill and picked a fistful of tea roses and maidenhair fern! I couldn't believe that this fern grew wild. You know how I love it, and how I used to tell you that when I married, I wanted only to carry a bouquet of maidenhair fern!

That same afternoon Maria took me to see a family of Tarascan Indians who had a son in Chicago. She wanted me to tell them about the city where their son had gone. When we went into this Indian house, I marveled at the imagination that the boy who ran away must have had . . . I wondered if he were happy in Chicago.

In this simple Indian house everything went on in the same room. It was cut into sections, by the furniture. If you wanted to go into the bedroom, all you had to do was to walk over to the corner that had a bed, etc. It was really funny, because the family was large, and at the time we paid our visit, all were in different "rooms," dressing, sleeping, or eating.

On the way home I wanted to buy some *huaraches* in the market, but Maria told me I couldn't wear Indian sandals in her house. The other day I really made trouble. I found in the *Barrio of San Miguel* Indians who carved masks out of wood. I bought four of them; they had real animal teeth in their mouths. That night I hung them across my bed, and when Lupe and

Maria came to say good night, they screamed in horror! They made me take the masks out of the house, because they were convinced that they have evil spirits in them! This should give you some idea of how these *mestizo* Mexicans are still influenced by the ancient superstitions of their country!

Uruapan, September 20, 1931

I suppose by now you are really curious about my life in Uruapan. From your letters, Mother, you say that you are "at ease" that I am shut up with these two old maids. I have been here twenty days, and if it were not for Giotto and Fra Angelico, I would simply burst!

The only time of day I can ever escape alone is in the morning; but I must return by one-thirty for lunch. And so my trips around the country have been very limited as to area. I've made several visits to the lacquer workers, and the other day on my way there I stopped to rest in the door of a small Indian hut. The sun is so brilliant in the mornings.

I watched the charcoal vendors coming down from the mountains. They were mostly old men, and their faces were as black as the charcoal itself. I sat there long enough to see the same old men returning back into the hills. They looked so tired and their donkeys so fragile that I wondered how either the animals or the old men would ever make a return trip to the village! Mexico does make one terribly sad at times.

As I was watching these vendors, a fat Indian came out of the door with a *machete* (long sword-like knife). He actually split a peanut in two with this weapon. He looked at the vendors with a shrug of his shoulders, and then he told me that Mexico needed another Porfio Diaz, but he doubted if one could be found. While we were talking, he split one peanut after another with the *machete*. Finally he said, "The best way to find a new Diaz is to put all the politicians into a silken bag, shake it well, and the man that can stick might be a new Diaz." Certainly this Indian has not been impressed by the Revolution!

When I return home after one of my excursions, the sisters are always curious to know what I have seen. After lunch they go to the front window of the parlor and stare into the street, while the victrola (which is part of the lamp) plays some sentimental record. In the afternoon callers drop in with their sewing, and then we go to the *Rosario* before dinner. After dinner all the bird-cages must be covered with black cloths, which make them look like tiny coffins hanging around the patio. When this chore is finished Santiago, the accountant from Señor Martinez's store, drops in. I've been studying Spanish with him in exchange for English. The nights are always rainy and cold, and as there is nothing else to do, I've been making good progress with Santiago.

During all the time I have spent with these two sisters, I have only seen them take one bath. Yesterday morning when the sun was high Lupe turned on the water in the fountain, hanging a curtain across one side, and then she disappeared behind it, carrying a large bar of pink soap. Everything that she does is without any natural gaiety. For her, the eyes of God are constantly watching!

Last Sunday I went to mass. The church was crowded. We sat in the front on straight wooden chairs; the Indians were kneeling on the floor around us. The mass was very long. I looked at the walls that were papered in gold and at the engravings that hung at an off-angle and which told the story of Christ. An old woman kept walking in and out of the rows of Indians on the floor. She sold them candles. The light from the candles gave their faces the golden color of the papered wall. It was really very lovely.

One woman had a chicken under her arm; it got away and started cackling and flying among the people. The priest stopped his heavenly discourse and shouted at the woman. Finally she caught the chicken and the priest continued with his sermon!

That Sunday in the afternoon we went to a movie. There were two films, one in German, the other in French. Even though these old maids could not understand what was being said, they loved the movies. Towards twilight we walked over

to the plaza and "paraded." The whole town paraded. There were two lines, one for the women, the other for the men. These lines circled round and round the garden, in the center of the plaza, Indians with their *rebozos*, the mestizo women dressed in bright organdy and shiny patent leather shoes; Indian men, in clean white "linen pajamas"; mestizo men, with their imitation American suits. No one spoke, but everyone looked at everyone else. The band played until it was dark. Then it began to rain, but no one left the lines. Everybody always parades on Sunday evenings. There is nothing else to do.

Patzcuaro, Michoacan, September 28, 1931

I left Uruapan yesterday, taking the afternoon train. My suitcase is filled with painted tin, and I carried a large basket of food which the sisters insisted I should take along. I tried to persuade them to come as far as this village, but they were too afraid.

This morning I dressed early, in order to make an excursion on the lake to the island of Tzintzuntzan (pronounced sin-soo-san). This island was once the capital of the Tarascan Empire. Two Indians rowed me over to the island in a curious boat, with sails like a butterfly. In Patzcuaro everyone is an expert fisherman. When we reached this island of Tzintzuntzan, I found myself in the midst of a ceremony dedicating a drainpipe to the people of this village. It was quite a military affair, and I found the General who was making the dedication of the drainpipe was the Minister of War, General Amaro. I had met him before with Mr. Pugibet at a polo game in Mexico City. This General is a pure Indian. He is responsible for organizing the Mexican army into a disciplined force, and teaching the cavalry polo. He has one eye, but he is supposed to be very shrewd. The people say his one eye sees more than all the eyes in Mexico!

When this military procession left the island, I looked carefully at the drainpipe and I found, in the earth that had been freshly excavated, dozens of ancient clay heads. I gathered as

many as I could stuff into my coat pocket. These are the most beautiful and strange things I have ever seen. Some look Greek, others Egyptian, and there are several which have the beards and helmets of the Spanish Conquistadors! If I did not have to be in Coyocan to settle the lease on my house, I would stay here on the island of Tzintzuntzan and dig!

Tlalpam, October 10, 1931

I am teaching in an Open Air School for Children in Tlalpam, a village fifty miles west of the capital, with a Japanese painter, Kitagawa, whom I met in 1929. Kitagawa is the only Japanese painter in Mexico. What he has taken from the Mexicans and combined with his own native style of painting is fascinating. Can you imagine Indians and their donkeys looking Japanese?

Kitagawa has been the director of this Open Air School for several years. This job gives him a free studio, paints, and a few extra pesos for expenses. At least he has enough to support a wife and baby. It is not much, but he has solved the problem of living as an artist.

This school is in an old house that the government has confiscated from some wealthy family. At the moment, it is falling to pieces. The Ministry of Education sends enough art supplies each month to keep the children of this town out of mischief. As a teacher I learn more from the children. I take about fifteen of them each afternoon to the fields surrounding the village. They carry no more than a sheet of heavy cardboard and a few tempera colors in jars. When they see something they want to draw they simply squat down and start to paint, beginning at the top of the paper and working down towards the bottom until there is not an empty space left! They paint with such precision and knowledge that it makes me want to hide my head in shame. There is never a moment's hesitation at what the next color should be, nor any indecision in the drawing. Being able to ex-



press themselves in this way, these little Indians take painting for granted. It is part of their day.

In the house where I am living the owner, Señora Garcia, has a real resentment towards the school. She belongs to one of the old families of Mexico. What she has left of the past is crammed into her house in Tlalpam. The floors are covered with deep red rugs, and in the salon there are many fine pieces of French furniture. A large painting of Porfirio Diaz hangs on one side of the room; facing this is a real Murillo! This woman would never have me as a boarder if she were not penniless. The first thing she asked was about my religion. I told her I hadn't any. That night after dinner she asked me to go with her to the village. We entered one of the houses near the plaza, passed through what appeared to be an ordinary salon, and then I found myself standing in the cloisters of a convent!

Convents are still against the law in Mexico; nevertheless, they exist. While I waited in the cloister alone I thought of the life this woman must be living. There must be a certain thrill in it, sneaking into such a place as a hidden convent every evening!

When Señora Garcia returned, she was accompanied by the Mother Superior, dressed in a blue robe with the large head-dress of a French nun. I was taken into the chapel and the Mother Superior asked me why I did not believe in God. I told her I did believe in God. And then she said that I could never receive his grace unless I became a Catholic. She made me kneel on the floor. I could hear her praying over my head. When we went away the Mother Superior gave me a medal of the Virgin Mary.

Since that night Señora Garcia watches me like a hawk to see if I show signs of ceasing to be a heathen. It is really uncomfortable to have religion pushed at you. The whole mystery of life is so complicated. I feel that I understand it better by just looking at the things that grow on the earth and at the wonderful things that happen in the sky. Everything living is a miracle to me, and I do feel God's presence as I walk alone through the fields, adoring the earth and the sky. At such moments I know

there must be a reason for being that is beyond the conception of mortals. But somehow when I enter a church the divineness of God flies out the window.

Tlalpam, October 11, 1931

I have had a bad cold and these last days have been spent in bed. This has given Señora Garcia a real chance to ply me with questions about you, dear Mother, and about my life. She can't understand how you ever let me go away from home. I told her I ran away, thinking that would put a stop to her questions. Now she's trying to persuade me to return home to you! Kitagawa came to see me while I was in bed; so did Manuel Bravo, the photographer, and his wife. Señora Garcia is worried about my friends. Manuel and Lola laughed at me in this funny bedroom with all the saints and red plush curtains. Kitagawa brought along a painting that I recently completed. He had it framed for me. The subject is a cement factory. When Señora Garcia saw this painting, I could tell by the look on her face she thought me a completely lost soul!

I think I'll go back to Mexico City next week. I almost forgot to thank you for my birthday present. Now that I am twenty-one years old I can vote!

Mexico, D. F., October 15, 1931

My house in Coyocan is freezing cold, so I've taken a room in the city. One can keep warmer here. It's the same room I lived in when I met Joe. I suppose it is silly to return to old memories, but I know the *Portero*, and he brings me hot coffee in the mornings. The rain has stopped at last; the sun is simply sparkling. It has dried the earth so that one can have a good canter into the country.

This morning I got up early and drove as far as the "Golden Lions" with Mr. Pugibet. The horses were waiting, beautifully groomed. They stood there pawing the ground, turning round

and round and wanting to run. I mounted quickly; it was good to feel the reins in my hands again. We galloped down the path that leads out into the open country on the far side of the "Grasshopper Palace"—that is the Aztec meaning of Chapultepec. We rode as far as the *Deserto de los Leones*. If I were not a painter I would spend all my time with horses!

Mexico City, October 20, 1931

Every afternoon around four I go to the Academy of San Carlos to work. Can you imagine, Mother, that this *Academia de Bellas Artes* of Mexico was an art center before the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock? The building itself reminds me of the Italian palaces of the Renaissance—it has that same atmosphere of cold emptiness, no matter how crowded the courtyard becomes with students.

I am so affected by my surroundings that I feel these days as though I were living during the time of the "Catholic Kings" of Spain. The galleries of San Carlos are filled with fine examples of Spanish painting: Velasquez, Goya, Ribera, El Greco, etc., as well as canvases of the Italian and French schools. This building has seen so much turbulent history that it was no surprise to find that the present director, Señor Vicente Lombardo Toledano, is a labor leader! The day I met him I expected to see a wild, boisterous Mexican. You can imagine my surprise to find a small, handsome, cultured man, sitting behind an enormous Colonial desk surrounded by paintings! But the thing that moved me was his concern about the lives of young painters today. He wanted to know what "our" government was doing for artists. When I told him that art was not a part of the government in the States, he remarked that it should be because that was the only way it could reach the people.

In spite of the poverty of this country and the tremendous economic problems to be solved, I've been impressed, even though I'm a foreigner, by the way in which public officials

respect artists. If one has any talent at all, there is a chance to apply it in some form through the Ministry of Education.

Nearly all the young painters here teach part of the time at the Academy. When they are not teaching they may have the use of one of the studios. I've been doing some sculpture with Luis Monasterio, whom I knew years ago in Los Angeles. He's one of the most talented sculptors of Mexico. He works entirely in stone and it takes days to chip away the slightest detail. Luis is so frail, I don't know where his energy comes from.

This is my first attempt at sculpture. It is exciting to feel the clay in your hands, to build the forms. I think every painter should model; it teaches one a plastic solidity that helps color and line in painting.

I have also made several lithographs. The instructor of lithography, Emilio Amero, is a great friend of Lombardo Toledano. The equipment for this medium is bad, but Amero has mountains of patience. I have worked hours with him trying to "pull" a good impression from a press that is practically worthless. There is a young Indian boy working with us named Antonio Pujol. He is only fourteen years old and already shows real genius as an engraver.

No one ever complains about the poor equipment, because we all know at what sacrifice the government supplies these few pieces.

I went to several meetings which the painter Siqueiros organized, trying to form a new Syndicate of Painters. No one seemed very enthusiastic, so now he has left the city to live in Taxco and just paint.

Whatever "revolutionary" spirit existed here in 1929 has faded out of the lives of most of these painters. I am glad, although I had a taste of "being on fire." It is a wonderful feeling to believe that you are going to change the world . . . all young people should have such an experience! I'm glad that I had it—though, to be honest, I was more interested in painting (and Joe) than in causes!

Mexico City, November 12, 1931

It is frightfully chilly. I find myself trying to think up ways to keep warm while painting. I have an oil stove beside me and I drink glass after glass of hot water. I'm working on a canvas nearly six feet long and four feet high! I suppose you would imagine this should keep me warm, but I'm working in such a manner that I freeze. The entire composition is being painted from a drawing. I work on small sections at a time, spending whole mornings on a single hand, building the form up with a tiny brush. I have come to the conclusion that there are too many pictures in the world! It is better to make a few good ones each year than dozens of failures. This is my first attempt at a large composition. It consists of four figures: a woman and two children sitting at a table eating; a baby is asleep on the floor.

I have tried to discipline myself to the point of grinding the colors I use. It takes so many hours to make one color that I have chosen the simplest palette: a few ochres, blue, and earth reds. Julio Castellanos, whom I think one of the most talented of all the younger painters, comes often to see me. Julio is very lazy, but when he works nothing else matters. His health is bad, and he does not want it to get any better, because he says if he felt really strong he wouldn't paint at all, he would just go to the *fronton* games every day! He always has a sore throat, but smokes pack after pack of strong black cigarettes. Julio usually sits on a chair beside me while I work, and when I have done a good piece of painting he always says, "Now you have an angel in your hands."

I have gone on many trips into the country with him, finding out-of-the-way chapels that are filled with the most wonderful "miracle paintings." In the small villages of Mexico one can always find a "miracle artist"; they are usually very simple workers who have discovered that they can paint as easily as they can till a field. Whenever an Indian feels that he has seen a miracle, he goes to the miracle painter, tells him what he has experienced, and the painter produces his subject on a piece of tin. Usually

these miracles are so fantastic and the patron's description so vivid that the result is something extraordinary! If only Henri Rousseau could have imagined such "spiritual" fantasies!

Julio has some engravings by Guadalupe Posada, the Mexican Daumier. Posada is another "natural genius." This man was just a common engraver who set himself up in a publishing house in Mexico City during the years that preceded the Revolution of 1910. His engravings are a cruel and humorous record of the events of that time. The illustrations he made for the popular ballads are drawn with a biting sarcasm equal to the acid Posada used in drawing on his zinc plates, which was quite a revolution in technique at that time.

Manuel Roderiguez Lozano, another young painter who has studied in Paris and is Julio's idol, has been so influenced by these "natural" artists of Mexico that he would like to paint with their naïve point of view. But like every painter who "studies art" it is impossible to turn back honestly to such techniques.

Mexico City, December 28, 1931

This Christmas was very beautiful in Mexico, even though it is entirely different from our American Christmas. I missed seeing lighted trees and I missed being with you, Mother dear. . . .

I spent most of the day in the house of Mr. Pugibet in San Angel. We had a delicious dinner in one of the largest dining rooms I have ever seen. The fireplace alone covers one side of the room. It is large enough for six men to stand inside, and it is made entirely from old Spanish tiles.

After dinner the children broke open a *pinata*. This is a large earthenware jar covered with tissue paper in the form of a grotesque figure. Inside, the *pinata* is filled with candies and fruit. The children are blindfolded and given a long stick. There is great fun in watching the blindfolded one find the *pinata* and smash it open, spilling the candies about the room. But I still think our custom of a tree is nicer.

There are so many fireworks on Christmas—pinwheels, rockets, and shooting stars—that the religious mood of the day almost vanishes. Nevertheless, all of these things are done for the “Madonna.” I went to see the Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico. There were thousands of pilgrims from all parts of the country who had come on foot and on burro to pay homage to this saint. I watched hundreds of them crawling up the steep hill on their knees, cactus plants strapped to their backs. I don’t understand such a manner of worship, in view of the fact that after this act of penitence they usually return to the bottom of the hill and get drunk on pulque!

Mexico City, January 15, 1932

You perhaps worry and wonder why my letters are so far apart. Now that I am perfectly strong again I’ll tell you that I had my appendix taken out in November. I was never really very ill, after I left the hospital. It was just difficult getting about for awhile. The doctor who performed the operation, Dr. Baz, is a wonderful surgeon. He made such a small incision—like a tiny cross. I don’t see why you are born with an appendix if it causes so much trouble. However, I have eaten just about everything I shouldn’t have in this country!

The day before New Year’s Mr. Fritz Bach took me to the port of Acapulco. We started out for a day in Cuernavaca, and on the way there Mr. Bach began to tell me all of his political troubles with the Communist Party and about his deep admiration for Leon Trotsky. His story lasted so long that I asked him to keep on driving to the coast. If I had known how far it actually was I never would have gone.

At midnight we were only halfway there. We stopped for coffee in a village called *Tres Caminos* (the Three Roads). In the square of this village there was a large tree, its branches covered with white flowers. Around the tree fires were burning, and the Indians were all asleep, all except one lone guitar player, who sat there in the moonlight playing and singing to the sleep-

ing people. It was the most beautiful New Year's eve I have ever seen!

At daybreak we arrived at Acapulco. The sky had turned a soft magenta near the horizon of the sea. Natives were still asleep in hammocks slung across the verandahs of their straw huts. I walked down to the beach, feeling exactly like Paul Gauguin; but I was too tired to stay awake any longer, so I lay down on the white sand and went to sleep.

Around ten Mr. Bach woke me up. He had found a hotel, but you would never have known it from the outside. When I asked for a bath, the native in charge escorted me to a funny contraption and told me to pull on a rope that hung down from the branch of a tree. When I looked up, I saw a large gourd perforated with holes. I didn't take the shower, and when I came out and tried to explain why to Mr. Bach, he got mad, and said that all "Americans were too damn spoiled!"

We stayed for a lunch of *tacos* and coconut milk, sitting on the beach under a large palm tree. I watched the Indians climb the trees for the cocos. It was all so beautiful, so utterly unspoiled, that I hated to leave.

At Taxco we stopped to call on Siqueiros. I found him living with Blanca Luz in a house on the top of a hill. A large red paper star-lantern hung on the porch! I asked Siqueiros what he was doing. He told me that he had organized all the little boys in Taxco to watch the cars of the tourists. If a tourist refused to have his car watched by this "boys' union," then their tires would be pierced with long nails! Wherever Siqueiros goes, trouble is bound to follow.

I am sailing for New York next week, on the *Oriente*.



## CHAPTER XIII

On Board S.S. *Sibony*, February 24, 1932

The last visible outline of New York has disappeared into the sea, like a doll's house. This ship is practically empty. I have been walking the narrow decks with a solitary little man in a long overcoat and a French beret. I am writing to you from the ship's salon. A string quartet is playing Victor Herbert's *Sweet Mystery of Life*. The few passengers listen to this music with distracted and forlorn faces.

It was a gray day in New York, the city covered with snow. Now the sun has come through the clouds and the sea is a deep blue. There are so many things to remember. First, I must tell you that I am a divorced woman! It did not take very long to get this way. Mr. Bernstein arranged everything. I did not like being questioned by the judge; my part had been "rehearsed" with the help of Mr. Bernstein and a Miss Helen Black. Perhaps it was because so many people were being divorced that mine took only a few minutes. Now that it is over, I feel years younger and a little unsteady, with my "freedom" typed out on a piece of paper.

It made me very unhappy to see Joe. He looked miserable. And I was simply amazed to find that he was living in Mr. Durant's old apartment, and that he had commenced to sign his articles with the pseudonym "Robert Evans."

I saw Mr. Durant on George Washington's birthday. He came to Mrs. Bernstein's apartment, looking very ill. I started to ask him why he had fired Joe, but I really didn't want to know, and so I just walked up Fifth Avenue with him and watched the parade. It was a real military parade, the first I have seen since I have "grown up." There were hundreds of flags and in every shop window a picture of Washington. If he were alive he would be two hundred years old! The people in the streets looked sullen; one could tell that they were worried. No one seems to have a job in New York.

I listened to the newsboys crying out the latest news from

the Disarmament Conference in Geneva. Tell me, Mother, will anyone ever really disarm? It sounded silly to hear these headlines when they were followed by the "Latest offensive of Jap troops in China." I wanted to ask Mr. Durant what he was thinking about, but he never talks seriously to me. When we reached the park I asked him to sit down and rest. I told him I had received a letter from Mr. Bach in Mexico, full of accusations against Joe. They all have to do with an article Joe had written in the *New Masses* called "Painting and Politics, The Case of Diego Rivera." When I read this article I realized at once that this was the answer to Pablo O'Higgins' letter, written so long ago, and as Communists are supposed to follow orders, this article against Rivera was just a job to be done in Joe's life.

The article was directed against Rivera's present exhibition. It tried to prove that Rivera's paintings, removed from the sunlight and altitude of Mexico City, revealed their strength and weakness more clearly than in their native surroundings. The article charged that Rivera owed a greater debt to the Mexican worker and the peon than they owed to him; that they had furnished him the content which justified his crude form and had infused purpose and meaning into the hand that progressed from Picasso to Zapata to Lenin, "only to falter at a critical moment, to desert the new-found line, and to plunge back into the sterility of middle-class concepts."

Joe stated that it was an accepted fact in the present day that art reflected economic changes, social conflicts, and political tendencies; that Fascism and Revolution had made art useful in a political sense rather than purely idealistic; that a poet or painter was in the present age identifying himself with some political camp.

Joe said that in 1929 Rivera was a famous revolutionary artist and was also known in Mexico as a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and that he participated in the formulation of crucial decisions. But in the spring of that year a revolt, headed by General Escobar, attempted to restore the power of the Church and the old landowners. The government

accepted Communist assistance in suppressing this revolt, but the moment it was crushed the government initiated a policy of disarming the peasants and suppressing the Communist Party.

"Militant workers and peasants were arrested in various parts of the country, their organizations were disrupted, and several Communists were assassinated, and in Puebla they arrested Jesus Garcia, head of the state organization of the Bloc.

"The head of the Bloc was Diego Rivera. He was the object of violent political attacks. . . . The governor of Durango denounced him as a traitor to the Republic and as a bad painter. Rivera replied to these charges in a letter published in *El Universal*, August 10, 1929, in which he defended the artistic merits of his frescoes, and declared that for three months he had been inactive politically with the permission of the Party because of ill health and his professional duties. The duties involved the painting of a vast fresco on one of the walls of the National Palace. It was to depict the History of Mexico from the Aztecs to the present time, and the original design culminated in a woman, symbolizing Mexico, holding to her heart an armed worker and an armed peasant."

The article continues, telling about the government's campaign of terror against revolutionary organizations and the confiscation of the Communist newspaper, etc., and its compromise with the clergy and its co-operation with American imperialism, represented at that time by Dwight Morrow, its reorganization of industry in the interests of native and foreign capital, and an agrarian policy that robbed the peasants of their land; and it accuses Rivera of co-operating with the officials who made these things possible, also because he accepted a government post as head of the *Bellas Artes*. The article claims that all three of these things were done while Rivera was a member of the Central Committee and head of the Workers and Peasants Bloc . . . I quote from it again:

"He now abandoned the line upon which he had developed his career; instead of painting the workers' and peasants' revolution he turned to 'National Art.' The original design for the

mural in the National Palace showing Mexico as a gigantic woman holding a worker and peasant in her arms was altered; for the worker and peasant, no doubt a painful sight to government officials who pass every day, were substituted harmless natural objects such as grapes and mangoes! Young art students who had been taught by Rivera to paint the life of the Indian masses were now puzzled to hear him grow enthusiastic about Colonial Art, the art of the Spanish Conquistadors hated by the Indians and beloved by the reactionary and clerical elements. They were further puzzled to hear the master who had taught them that only in working in the Communist Party, in close contact with the masses, could they do great work, now teach that they ought to leave the Party, that the form of art is everything, the theme nothing. Once, during the revolutionary period, the master issued manifestoes attacking the studio and easel painting as bourgeois; now he was beginning to sell his talent to Chicago and California millionaires, whose wives he painted in yellow evening gowns with pretty little flowers in the corner of the canvas above his signature!"

Joe continues, "It is worth noting that neither the resolution nor the discussions preceding it referred to Trotskyism. For two years after Trotsky's expulsion from the Russian Party, Rivera remained on the Central Committee of the Mexican Party and supported its line. It was only after he was expelled that he discovered he was a 'Trotskyite.' He issued a statement to the bourgeois press to that effect, ascribed his expulsion—quite falsely—to his Trotskyist beliefs, and for the first time launched public attacks on the Soviet Union to the term of 'Thermidor.'"

Further on the article says: "The Trotskyist label left Rivera free to pose as a 'revolutionary' painter while glorifying Mexican chauvinism on the walls of the National Palace and accepting commissions from the wealthy American bourgeoisie he once so savagely caricatured . . . Filled with the 'revolutionary' spirit of his new Trotskyist faith, Rivera made a pilgrimage to California, whose prisons still hold Tom Mooney, and painted a mural glorifying American business. The workers and farmers in this

mural form one happy family with their exploiters. The State of California, a buxom wench, is the mother of them all; the force of the revolutionary ideas which made the frescoes in the Secretariat great are lacking; instead, the artist resorts to anemic abstract symbolism, the refuge of the bankrupt bourgeois artist."

These excerpts from Joe's article ought to give you a clear idea of an American Communist's conception of painting. For me it is a half-baked concept, to say the least (politically and artistically)! I don't think Rivera was ever a sincere revolutionist, but there is no use denying that he is a first-rate painter. The Communists made as much use out of him as he made out of them. I don't think the World Revolution will suffer from renegade artists, but it will certainly suffer from such bigoted, intolerant reformers as Joe, whose conception of art would eventually lead the world back to the very things he hates; that is, if painters under an "emancipated proletariat" must confine themselves to a limited subject matter, "glorifying workers," then they will just create "national art" in a different color!

Diego is in New York now. This article, along with an incident that happened in the John Reed Club, were certainly of no help to me, as I must still go on working in Mexico. The John Reed Club publicly returned one hundred dollars of Rivera's money stating, "Since we do not wish to carry on our activities with the money of a renegade, the John Reed Club will return Rivera's contribution, with which he hoped to buy himself that revolutionary cloak which he needs to serve his capitalist masters effectively."

On top of all this I had a letter from Mr. Bach, saying he had seen that article signed by Robert Evans, and wanting to know if Robert Evans is Joe Freeman. He said he thought it must be Joe, because only he knew those details on the Mexican situation at the time the article dealt with; he also stated that a lot of those details were furnished by him. He threatened to write an article opposing this one—taking up Rivera's defense and attacking Joe. He said if Joe is really the author, that his opinions now

aren't what they were then—that he, Joe, had agreed with Bach in most of the political differences they had with the Central Committee, and that Joe was opposed to Diego for personal reasons, and not for political ones. He said when Joe was in Mexico he threatened to liquidate Diego as a revolutionary painter—that he had told Bach that—and that now he was doing it. Therefore he, Bach, would publish an article, and if the *New Masses* refused to publish it, he'd send it to the *Nation* or the *New Republic*!

While I was sitting in the sun in Central Park with Mr. Durant, I tried to get his opinion on Rivera, Joe, and Bach. Mr. Durant ignored the whole thing. He says that he is not interested in Art for the People, that there are more important problems facing the world today. Mr. Durant said that the world was headed for an awful catastrophe unless the so-called democratic statesmen wake up to what is actually going on!

Often I wonder whether or not, if I had gone to another place in the world to study as an artist, I would have escaped being thrown into so many political controversies. When I left home in 1927, politics never entered my head; now I have heard so much that I begin to feel possessed. If it is true, as the Communists claim, that the world is headed for a war to end "capitalism" and establish a new order, how can one remain aloof? It really worries me. Most of the New York Communists are emigrants from Russia—that is, they came here, like Joe, about thirty-five years ago; and as our family Bible goes back to three hundred years of struggling "democratic pioneers," I become impatient with these old-world reformers. Mr. Durant's case is different. I think his political ideas stem from just being bored with a staid life in Philadelphia!

On shipboard one has "oceans" of time to think. Please, Mother, write me a long letter. I am anxious to know what you feel about the things I have written. . . .

Mexico City, March 15, 1932

It is spring again. There are not many weeks left for me to "work in luxury." I left the large canvases I painted this year in New York. Mrs. Harriman has them in her gallery. It is such a job taking one's work out of this country that I'm going to spend the rest of my time drawing. In New York I bought some fine cameo paper. The drawings I'm working on now are built up with hundreds of tiny pencil strokes. They look like a silver-point.

Mexico has had a tremendous influence on me as a human being and as an artist. I have assimilated a great deal from the Indian tradition of this country, and from the Spanish. But I feel I have learned more from the early Colonial painters and the Spanish masters in the San Carlos Academy. Not being a Mexican, I have little in common with the pure Indian, although their struggles to live in this modern world have opened my eyes to the material problems of our time, and it would be insincere for me to attempt to use the plastic qualities of their work. I have had too many centuries of Europe mixed into my blood. A man cannot become "primitive" overnight. I supposed I'll be criticized for saying this, but it's true. Rivera may feel at home sitting on a pyramid of Chichen-Itza, but I feel more at ease walking through an arched corridor of a Colonial building! And this makes me wonder about the future of this country.

The ancient cultures of the Aztecs, Toltecs, and the Mayans were created around their spiritual conceptions of the universe. Now that we are in a century of tremendous mechanical and scientific progress, I think it is impossible for us even to conceive building an edifice to the moon!

Rivera, after searching for his identity in Europe as an artist, was smart enough on his return to Mexico to make use of the ancient "Codex" drawings and architectural motifs of the pyramid builders. If he had simply developed into an imitation Zurbaran, Picasso, or French Modern, he would be just another painter. It is natural that any Mexican artist of today should make

use of the artistic designs of the ancient Indian cultures, because they are in themselves part of those ancient races; they will never become purely European, or North American in their conception of life, any more than a Chinese!

I know, too, that I am fortunate to have studied in this country at this particular time. Mexico, in spite of the energetic efforts of the government to preserve the Indian past, will out of necessity have to incorporate more of our American customs. Even if the government remained passive, the tourists from the "north" who are already beginning to invade it would have a decided influence on the art of these native Mexican craftsmen. When people begin to search in out-of-the-way villages for the charming lacquer boxes, painted pottery, etc., they unconsciously stimulate "mass production," and little by little the care and love that went into a single object will disappear, simply because there won't be time enough to put it there!

#### Mexico City, Easter, 1932

It is Easter eve. Can you believe that an entire year has passed? I spent the day riding in the country with Mr. Pugibet. We started before sunrise in order to reach the old Monastery in the *Deserto de los Leones*. At sunrise we stopped to water the horses in the little village of San Geronimo. The Indians of this village were already hard at work decorating the plaza with long garlands of flowers.

Mr. Pugibet bought me a beautiful bouquet of roses (they were a nuisance to hold, riding over the hilly country). Mr. Pugibet was a Captain in the French cavalry, and on these rides, whenever we come to a steep ravine (most of the time we are at an angle that would frighten you to death) he insists on plunging down the ravine. His theory that a good horseman should never ride around a hazard is a bit overdone!

Before reaching the Monastery my horse lost its footing on the side of a mountain, covered with a dense growth of pine trees. I had a bad fall; my leg was caught for a moment under the



belly of the horse. I managed to get to my feet, but the poor animal rolled down the side of the mountain. Mr. Pugibet had an awful chase after this frightened animal. Finally he caught him and I remounted, feeling as shaky as the horse.

Mr. Pugibet always brings a large, brass hunting horn when we go on these rides. He plays the different hunting tunes from France; they sound weird echoing through the Mexican mountains.

During the mass in the Monastery, I could smell the roses and jasmine that had been planted there centuries ago by the Carmelite monks. Their fragrance came through the crumbling windows; it seemed that we were kneeling out-of-doors in a field of these flowers.

After mass Mr. Pugibet told me that I should become a Catholic. He said that I would never find any peace in my heart until I accepted the Holy Trinity and knew the Grace that comes from Holy Communion. I watched him take the Communion from the priest, and I wondered if he really felt holy inside after eating this religious cracker.

After mass we walked through the Monastery. Mr. Pugibet took me through an underground passage, pointing out the disciplinary cells of the monks. They were left there in total darkness to brood and reflect over their conduct!

Before we started down the steep mountains into the valley of Mexico, I took one last look over this beautiful country. The city lay in an oval basin, surrounded by mountains. The two volcanoes, Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl (the Sleeping Lady) were majestically radiant in the clear sunlight. They will always be the eternal guardians for *Tenochtitlan*, this capital of Montezuma, and the first great city of New Spain. There are times when I would like to believe that *Quetzalcoatl* (the God of the Air) who made people happy, filling the air with perfumes and singing birds, and who commanded the earth to be covered with flowers and fruits, would once again come to these people in his boat of serpent skins. Certainly they were never happy with the Spaniards; now they look upon us Americans with great distrust.

Mr. Pugibet says a people can never be conquered by force, that a resistance breaks out in their souls, and when this happens, only love and understanding can conquer that resistance.

Around two in the afternoon we rode back into the village of San Geronimo. I was so hungry that we stopped long enough for me to eat a big dish of steaming *mole*. Mr. Pugibet told me I would spoil my French dinner at the Casa Blanca; but I am leaving Mexico tomorrow, returning home again to you, Mother dear—and I wanted so much to eat a last dish of real Mexican *mole*!

## CHAPTER XIV

Stockbridge, Massachusetts, August 10, 1932

Mother dear:

I wait to hear from you with a real lump in my heart. I don't think I will forget this summer as long as I live. It seems that the bottom has fallen out of the world. Of course I did come home feeling that I had worked hard enough to be of some importance. I suppose the struggle I had to make just enough money to live on this summer is no different from the struggle millions of people are having throughout this country. No one has any security any more. There seems no way to end the frightful unemployment. Everything that President Hoover proposes never materializes, here or abroad. The Disarmament Conference has ended in a flop; the way it has ended makes me wonder about the sincerity of all men. President Hoover's plan to reduce armies and abolish tanks, guns, and battleships seems practical, when you think how much money the world would save on these destructive things; but as I see it, no one really wants to disarm. And if the rest don't, then what?

I don't know whether unemployment is worse back here in the east or not. Of course, I never realized until I crossed the Mexican border what was actually happening in our country. I never imagined a bank could "collapse," nor could I believe it when I saw the "scrip" money being issued in your office for the unemployed.

Passing through Washington, I saw remnants of the "Bonus Army." They certainly looked like desperate people. General MacArthur claims that most of them were not war veterans, but whatever they were, they are a deplorable lot of human beings! With the way things are, I'm worried about you. Your work there in the County Welfare office frightens me, especially since you told me about the riot. I don't know why you're so confident nothing will ever happen to you! Is George working? I'm still angry with him because of the way he nagged at me about being the "spark of genius" without a job. I don't think I ever worked

so hard for fifty dollars in all my life as I did during the two months I taught the children drawing at Palos Verdes. I was full of enthusiasm after working with the children in Mexico. But those children at Palos Verdes were just spoiled brats whose mothers wanted to get rid of them a few hours each week. They only wasted paper and chewed on their crayons!

I did have some fun out of the women's clubs, and they paid me well. I wonder if those ladies will ever remember what I told them about the Mayans, Aztecs, and Toltecs? I even ventured to say America should have a Ministry of Fine Arts connected with the educational system of our country!

Back here in the east there is a great deal of speculation about who is going to be President. Both the Democratic and Republican parties are using the appeal of the Eighteenth Amendment as a means to solve unemployment. I suppose everybody would feel better these days if they had a good swig of something. How is Upton Sinclair getting along? Do you still think he is a troublemaker?

The day I went to see him about the Russians and his wife's movie, he talked a great deal about his plan to "save" California—that is, if he becomes governor. He said that all the idle farmlands and factories should be taken over by the state and operated for the benefit of the unemployed. The owners would be paid through bonds which would be issued and sold to the people of California in denominations as low as ten dollars. Sinclair feels that the people should be urged to withdraw their savings from the banks and invest them in these bonds. Everyone with an income of over five thousand dollars would be taxed thirty per cent on fifty thousand dollars. Inheritance, public utility, and stock transfers would be boosted sharply, and all needy people over sixty, including those who are blind or physically unable to earn a living, would receive fifty dollars a month from the state. I realize that you don't like the "Epic" Plan, but you're so close to these problems, I would like to know your opinion.

Upton Sinclair is so practical and yet he is very impractical.

His wife is supposed to possess clairvoyant powers. She can tell what is written on a piece of paper concealed in an envelope (her husband is writing a serious article about this); nevertheless, this power has not helped her in divining the whereabouts of Eistenstein, Tisse, and Alexandroff!

You will wonder why I am in New England. Mr. Crowninshield invited me to come up to Stockbridge. I'm painting his niece, and when this is finished I will make a drawing of his brother.

Stockbridge is the most unreal place I have ever seen. It is as though time never passed through this village. The same families have lived here for generations, and the village is just as it was a hundred years ago. I even saw an old woman (one of the best families) riding a bicycle, dressed in a long white skirt, wide belt around her waist, and a straw hat like a man's on her head. The seat of her bicycle was covered in white linen, with a lace fringe hanging all around!

There is a Sanatorium here, too. It is for "nervous people" with money. Since the stock market crash this place has been overcrowded with patients. Mr. Crowninshield and his family don't like their village to be cluttered up with nervous people. Everyone looks so chic that I can't tell a patient when I see one; but when I am out walking with Mr. Crowninshield, he usually nudges me and says, "Over there is one, you can always tell them by their walking sticks!" Some days I feel nervous enough to have a walking stick.

Stockbridge, August 23, 1932

Your letter arrived yesterday. You tell me that your mother's family came from Stockbridge. What was their name? Everyone here is very distinguished. Some of the most distinguished seem a little queer to me. Since I've been meeting everyone, perhaps some of these people are related to me.

The other day Mr. Crowninshield took me for a long walk through a mountain called the Icy Glen. It was beautiful walk-

ing through the mountain and when we finally came out on the other side we were standing in a field that gave one a splendid view of this country. Mr. Crowninshield, all during the walk, tried to convince me that I should learn to make chic portraits. He says that if I can only acquire the knack of making a good likeness, putting sincerity into the subject, it will be easy to make money. He suggested I look carefully at the work of a Frenchman, de Monvel (whom I dislike very much).

Mr. Crowninshield is so good to me, I wish I could do something that really pleases him. He says that my pictures are too sad. I have been drawing his brother Edward (who looks very depressed to me anyway) who has an antique shop filled to the brim with the most beautiful china. I'm afraid to walk around the rooms for fear I'll break something. Mr. Crowninshield adores his brother, who is not at all well. He is so thin, and his skin has the color of old ivory.

Mrs. de Gersdorff, his sister, is a very kind and gay woman. She loves flowers and spends most of her time gardening. Her husband, a lawyer, comes up from New York for the week ends. He is very jolly, but cannot see eye to eye with Mr. Crowninshield on anything. He thinks his brother-in-law's ideas on Modern Art are crazy. He cannot understand why Crowninshield spends all his money collecting what he calls "worthless paintings." And he does not like *Vogue* magazine or *Vanity Fair*.

Mrs. Morgan (whose daughter I have been painting) is so understanding and intelligent. She is Mr. de Gersdorff's daughter, and I think has real talent for painting. I have been sketching out-of-doors with her little girl, who loves to draw, too.

On Sundays there are usually many guests invited for lunch at the de Gersdorffs'. The food is simply wonderful. I have never tasted such roast beef and home-made icecream. This whole atmosphere is quite a change for me. These people are rich enough not to be worried at the moment, but sometimes I think they worry more than people without money. I have never really cared about being rich; I only want to make enough money to help you, dear Mother. I'm going to work hard at these portraits.

I hope I can develop a flair for making people chic and serene; that is something I never thought about before.

Stockbridge, September 15, 1932

Will you send me my heavy coat? We have had a few nippy days. I hate to think of winter. Mrs. de Gersdorff wants to give me one of her old fur coats. I hate to accept it; when she offered it to me, it brought back the problem of what I'm going to do this winter. Mr. Crowninshield has certainly spent enough time trying to help me with my work. Always there is something that isn't to his liking in what I do; nevertheless, he thinks eventually I will catch on to his point of view. The trouble is that to think like *Vogue* magazine, one has to do one of two things: live in that world and love it, or be like the dreaming shop girl who wants to be an imitation of Mrs. So-and-So. I've never wanted to do either of these things. I love beautiful clothes, but not to the extent of being conscious of them all day long.

I asked Mr. Crowninshield if I could drive over to New York State and visit the Bernsteins, who have a country house near the village of Hillsdale. He sent me over in a car with a chauffeur. When I drove up at the Bernsteins' everyone laughed at me; but then, these people looked just as funny to me with their strange "summer clothes." If only there could be a middle-of-the-way for "intellectuals." They don't give a single thought to what they wear!

I spent the afternoon hiking with a young man named Dallett, whom I had met at the Bernsteins' apartment in New York. Mr. Dallett had two hunting dogs with him and I found walking over the hills with these dogs and Mr. Dallett very relaxing. I suppose I'm homesick for the things I used to do with you and my brothers. I will always be grateful, Mother, that you let us have animals when we were children. If I have saved myself from becoming spoiled, it is because you made it possible for us children to grow up in the out-of-doors.

Stockbridge, October 5, 1932

Well, another birthday has passed. The Bernsteins invited me over to Hillsdale to spend my birthday with them. Mr. Dallett drove up from New York with a cake with my name on it! This was a real surprise.

Becky told me that Mr. Dallett's former wife had lived in Mexico for awhile. She studied sculpture there, but something tragic seems to have happened to her. Mr. Dallett is very nice, but he seems to be running away or trying to find something. . . . On my birthday I came downstairs into the kitchen very early in the morning. I found him building a fire and preparing the breakfast for us all. While he was doing these chores, he kept drinking from a gallon bottle of moonshine. I have never seen anyone drinking like this in the early morning; it made me sad, because he seemed a real normal American after many of the people I have known, seeking some meaning for their lives in Communism. But watching him bending over the fire in the morning sunlight, drinking that moonshine, made me wonder why most people I have met in the east feel so insecure.

A French artist who lives down the road called on us in the afternoon. He brought the son of Matisse, the French painter. Towards sunset I went for a walk with Mr. Matisse and talked about France and painting. He told me that he's going to open a gallery in New York and he wants to see my drawings.

Visiting the Bernsteins is like another world, after the life I have been living in Stockbridge, but their talk tires me. I am sick of hearing about Russian politics. Sometimes I wonder why these people ever came to America.

Stockbridge, November 4, 1932

It looks as if I'm going to stay here for the winter. All sorts of unexpected things have happened. Dr. Riggs (who is the founder of the Sanatorium) returned to Stockbridge with his family. Mrs. de Gersdorff took me to his house for tea one after-



noon. He wanted to see my drawings, and after speaking with me about the world and art, both he and his wife invited me to stay with them.

I had a bad cold, and they made me go to bed right off, but I didn't mind. I have never had such pampering, and I have never had a cold treated so "scientifically." When Dr. Riggs finally let me out of bed, he asked me if I would like to stay with them in Stockbridge like an adopted daughter and paint my heart out in his studio. He asked me also if I would like to give lessons a few hours each day to some of his patients.

The studio is a dream, even though it is cluttered up with small ship models. I have been trying to make a drawing of Alice, one of the Riggs girls. She is my age, very beautiful, with long black hair combed like a Madonna, and eyelashes so thick they don't seem real. There are two other guests near my age; they are very prominent debutantes from Chicago. Their father lost all his money in the stock market crash and now these girls are going to business school in Pittsfield, trying to learn shorthand in order to be secretaries for Dr. Riggs.

Mrs. Riggs is a gentle, tiny woman, the sweetest person I have ever met. She adores her husband, who is not well. He spends a great deal of his time in bed, it seems. This house is run on a strict schedule; we all have to follow it. So far the people I have been teaching to draw don't seem ill to me. I would like to ask them what their ailments are, but there is a rigid rule in this place that no one is allowed to speak of his illnesses. I am really curious. They looked perfectly well to me. Certainly none of them can be ill about money, because it costs too much to stay here.

Dr. Riggs is a man who can do everything. He draws very well. He has been asking me endless questions about Modern Art, which he does not understand at all. The other day he called me into his room and showed me some cubist reproductions. He had covered up the signatures, and he wanted to see if I could tell a "normal cubist" painting from that of a nut. He thinks they are all the same: works from demented minds.

When I picked out the "sane" pictures, he could not understand it, not even after I did my best to point out the constant repetition of design, without any coherent organization, in the work of an insane person.

Dr. Riggs told me that I think too much about art. He said that I should learn to live a balanced day, dividing my time into periods of work, rest, and play. I never thought that I might be overdoing it, as far as painting goes, because for an artist working is in a sense playing and resting, and of course working. An artist can't ever escape from what he sees. Even when I'm talking or laughing with people, I am more aware of their noses, mouths, eyes, etc., than in what they are doing or saying.

After dinner at night we sit in front of the fire. Mrs. Riggs and the other girls always do needlework. I find myself watching them. I have never taken the time to learn to do these things, although I can mend my stockings, but one can't drag stockings into the living room. Dr. Riggs is an expert archer, and when he is well enough he spends the evenings sitting in front of the fire on a low cobbler's bench, making himself an endless supply of arrows.

The conversation this week has been full of talk about the coming elections. Dr. Riggs is a Republican. He scrutinizes the entire economic crisis through which this country is passing from the point of view of a psychiatrist. He says the entire world has a neurosis. He dislikes Franklin D. Roosevelt to such an extent that, if I believed him, I would be frightened to death for our country if Roosevelt were elected President. A young lawyer who is married to a very rich woman comes often to visit Dr. Riggs. This lawyer, Adolf Berle, has been working on many of Roosevelt's speeches. Both Mr. and Mrs. Berle have sensitive, idealistic faces. They are apparently so sure of what they believe that I cannot understand why they should come to Dr. Riggs for advice about the Presidential election. Also, I can't understand what Dr. Riggs could advise Mr. Berle about, since he hates the man Mr. Berle is supporting for President. You know that I am able to cast my first vote this year. I'm thrilled to be at last a

"part" of our country, and in spite of Dr. Riggs wanting me to vote for Hoover, I am not going to do it. I don't know a great deal about politics, but I would like to see this country out of the mess it is in. I think Roosevelt has a clearer idea of what the people need than Hoover. Anyway, just look at his face! I mean Hoover's.

Stockbridge, December 1, 1932

This Thanksgiving was the first American Thanksgiving I have had in years. We ate a large turkey with all the trimmings. I hollowed out a pumpkin for the center of the table and filled it with flowers. Mrs. Riggs invited the doctors and their wives, and there must have been twenty people for dinner.

In the afternoon before dinner I took a long walk, gathering sprigs of red berries and small branches of bright colored leaves. This is something that we westerners miss, the turning of the leaves. In New England the countryside becomes a blaze of color. If it is a clear day, the sky is sparkling blue and the effect is unbelievably gay.

During the long walk in search of berries I thought a great deal about the early settlers of this country, the Puritans. They must have been people with strong characters, because they have left such an imprint on this section of America. What they achieved in simplifying architecture is really beautiful. I have never seen an ugly doorway, nor a house of that period with bad proportions. But when one enters the house of an "authentic" Puritan, one feels that all the joy of living has flown out the window. It seems to me that living by such consciously strict rules would fill one with the devil's quirks! Certainly such rigidity of character left no room for tolerance. I feel these things in some of the people I have met here. Their point of view about painting stops with English portraiture. Dr. Riggs goes a bit further, but he stops with John Singer Sargent. When I said that Sargent was a calculating technician, because with all his facility of technique he never added anything emotionally or plastically to his subjects, Dr. Riggs was really annoyed with me.

When I showed him some reproductions I have of Van Gogh, he could not even look at poor Vincent. And so you see what different worlds there are for people. I am beginning to lose my enthusiasm for working in the studio. I want to hide what I paint, because I know he thinks I am dabbling. But to return to the Puritans. It seems to me that in their struggle to simplify life, they have in a sense made it more complicated, because they have achieved a real feeling of superiority which unconsciously controls their point of view towards all things. I have found this true in discussing Mexico. Whatever I say of interest about that country is not judged fairly, because the people of New England think Mexicans are inferior.

I suppose I could turn a corner in my life. I mean that at twenty-one, one is still able to adapt oneself. I see it all, as clear as crystal, a life of comfort and quiet order, no worries, and the feeling that one is safe. But then there is another road that does not follow set ways, and even though this road is filled with uncertainties and unpredicted adventures, one really learns about the world—and life. The only thing that one needs to follow this road is not to be afraid. I only know I don't want to clip my wings—yet.

Stockbridge, December 15, 1932

Several days ago I went on a tree-chopping party with Alice Riggs and the debutantes. They are certainly spirited girls, and they taught me how to fell a tree. During the early part of the day I was so green I ran the length of a falling tree! I was so frightened I didn't have the sense to run to one side. Fortunately I wasn't hurt.

In the afternoon their father asked me if I wanted to see his dream palace. He said this dream drove him into bankruptcy. After walking through their magnificent Pittsfield home with its Italian mantelpieces, English panelling, French drawing rooms, and marble baths with golden faucets in the shape of dolphins, I could hardly believe that one family could have dragged all

this stuff across the sea from Europe, to furnish a house on the top of a hill in New England.

The debutantes' father walked through the rooms laughing in a strange way that frightened me. Returning down the hill towards the gatekeeper's house, where they are now living, I realized how the depression has hit both the rich and the poor in our country.

Dr. Riggs has found the real secret of living, even though he is a wealthy man. He lives simply. One feels that his house stands on firm earth. It is a warm, friendly house, where each member of the family contributes to its cheerfulness. I suppose I could stay there for a long time, but this will not solve my own life. I'm going to look for a job in N. Y. after Christmas.

Last week end Mr. Dallett invited me to drive down to Pawling. When I arrived, I found him and his hosts very high. One woman sat on the floor playing a victrola, spinning glasses of gin on the records! I just stayed for dinner, and went back to Stockbridge alone, even though it was snowing. They all made me very unhappy, and spoiled what might have been a gay week end. Why do people do things like this?

New York, January 10, 1933

This week in New York I was given a job illustrating a book on South America by the French author, André Siegfried. I have managed to find a small room on East Thirty-fourth Street. It is bitter cold in the city and some days I long for the pleasant room I left in Stockbridge. I will always remember Christmas there, a real family Christmas . . . I gave everyone a drawing, but really, my drawings could not make up for the presents and the kindnesses the Riggs have shown to me. I hope this book turns out well. Illustrating is one way to make money.

The sweater you sent is a perfect fit. Did you like the bag I bought for you? Oh Mother, our lives seem sad at times. I wish that we could be together. As things are, I am a burden to you, and yet I try not to be. Are the boys working?



GROUP OF EIGHT DRAWINGS BY IONE ROBINSON

BY IONE ROBINSON



1890  
Felix S. 1890

After Rembrandt



*La caturia Rosalena*







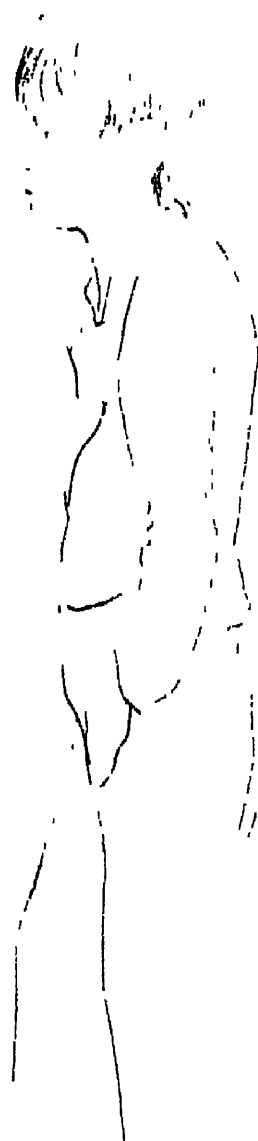




Tom Paine  
1776



He young man -  
any one - 1919/1920  
the 1919/1920



## CHAPTER XV

South Mulberry Plantation, South Carolina,

March 27, 1933

It is like springtime here in the south, the air is so warm and soft after the biting cold of New York. Mr. Dallett invited me to spend this week on his family's plantation. I never dreamed, after seeing him so badly dressed at Becky's, that his father would own a plantation! His father and mother are nice people. I like John's father best, in spite of the difficulty of talking. He suffers from deafness. Mrs. Dallett is too artificial. I don't like elderly women to pull their eyebrows, and dye their hair blue, and paint their faces. I don't mean this to be a criticism, it is simply an impression I have. You are so beautiful, so very beautiful, without any effort.

I brought my illustrating down here, as the drawings must be completed this week. It is a pity to work in such surroundings. I am in my room most of the day, but I do stop work long enough to take a canter before dinner.

John hunts all day long. His energy never seems to wear out, but he is never happy. He says that his family will not let him do the things he wants to do. He even told me he hated his mother! I can't understand a grown man feeling this way, if he continues to accept material comforts from them. Perhaps money does spoil people.

This place could be very beautiful, yet it lacks beauty. I mean the house. There is an air of tension about every room. Something seems to have happened in the lives of these people. When I wrote my name in the guest book, I saw quite by chance the same names, over and over again, those of John's parents and his family repeated, marking off the years. No one else seems to have come here.

The other afternoon I drove down to Charleston to see the historical houses of that city. The Civil War has never ended for some of those old families. I felt the nostalgia and bitterness reflected in each object "on view" for the public. It is incredible

that part of our country is still living so much in the past. The superintendent of the Dallett plantation comes from one of these families. He looks very seedy. We rode over to his house one afternoon and there it stood, a great, majestic manor, unpainted, the wood a dirty gray from the countless years without care. A civil war seems to be the worst form of war, because the side that is defeated doubts the future. The defeated endure their misery, avenging their defeat in reliving the past, which is a hopeless way of living. . . .

Riding home from this old mansion, we stopped to rest the horses under a large, moss-covered oak beside the Cooper River. Mr. Dallett asked me to marry him. He said that love was not as important as just being friends; he said he loved me, but knew that I did not love him. He seemed very miserable sitting in the gray landscape beside the river, and when I asked him why he drank so much, he said that he needed a drink to dig what fun he could out of life! I'm glad that I have work to do with my heart and hands and that I am an artist. This way one can always escape from the weariness of this world.

New York, February 15, 1933

The drawings for the *Impressions of South America* are finished. They are not important, but they will break the monotony of the printed page. My room is crowded with my painting things and the luggage of a Turkish woman and her son. This woman I met a few months ago. She has no money, no work, and no place to go. I borrowed a cot; she and her son are sleeping in my bed.

This woman has spent many years in Spain. I like to hear what she tells me about that country. Of course, she lived there during the monarchy and knows nothing whatsoever about the new Republic.

Mr. Dallett comes often to see me. The other day I caught a glimpse of him getting out of his car in the street below my window. It was snowing and his face looked very white in the

snow under his black hat, and so unhappy. The following afternoon I took Alice Riggs to tea in his apartment. I told her he wanted to marry me, and she thinks I should accept. But I'm afraid she was impressed by a few pieces of English furniture and a model of the "Flying Cloud" on top of an early American chest.

I sat on the sofa watching the snow falling in the courtyard below. The old houses of New York have charm; one escapes the turmoil of the city in them. Tell me, Mother, do you think people can build a life together on simple interests like dogs, horses, and the out-of-doors?

New York, February 28, 1933

Your letter was a surprise. You say that I should get married. I'm afraid to make another mistake. Will you come to New York? Really, I don't know my own mind any more. I try to see things as they are, but it is difficult. I would like to steady myself with just an average normal life. Please come, I need you.

South Mulberry Plantation, April 5, 1933

It was a great disappointment that you came all the way east and had to go away before I was married. The hours you spent telling me about the years of anxiety and worry I have caused you made me very unhappy. I know that you never wanted me to be an artist and that you still look upon me as a little girl. You said that you wanted me secure from the heartaches of life. Do you honestly believe people can be that way?

My wedding was very sad without you. . . . Oh, why can't things, just a few things, happen in the right way? Alice Riggs was a great help in keeping me from being a baby. We were married in Greenwich, with a small reception at John's family's apartment, and then we took the train for the south.

I am very happy; every day passes doing the things I love:



walking with the dogs, riding horseback. It is real spring; the woods are covered with dogwood and lilies-of-the-valley.

You won't expect a long letter at such a time, but tell me, when you write, what happened to you in Washington—what it was like. You say that the *New York Times* is the only American newspaper worth reading; well, I will send it to you every day. What a strange woman you are! The only thing you would let me buy for you in New York was a tiny white organdy collar, at Best's, and the *Times*!

New York, April 25, 1933

We are looking for a house to live in. John hates uptown; he only likes these old houses downtown. It makes me laugh, because Joe was just the opposite. Do wives ever have the chance to say where they want to live?

Mrs. Dallett's sister has just returned from Paris. She is called Auntie Julie, a nervous little woman who has never married. She smokes endless gold-tipped cigarettes in an ebony holder. Auntie Julie and Mrs. Dallett send me so many boxes of flowers. I can't help but think of the tubes of paint that might be in those boxes of flowers.

I'm trying to make this family gay. You'll laugh when I tell you I'm actually doing some needlework! Mrs. Dallett does needlework all the time. The other day she told me she would give us some real Chippendale chairs if I would embroider enough covers for the seats of twelve chairs. It takes so long to make one flower, and my mind is beginning to wander; I'm thinking of the time wasted not drawing. . . .

Mr. Dallett spends his evenings looking over hunting magazines and finding fault with Franklin D. Roosevelt. These rich Republicans are interesting to me, after having spent so much time with the other extreme. Our country is beginning to divide itself, and if the hate that has started to grow continues, it will just make it that much harder to find a real solution for the people. People who are in the habit of having too many luxuries

resent losing even the smallest one, unless, of course, they are exceptional. Mrs. Dallett has given up her car and chauffeur, but she holds one taxi all day long. I really can't see that she has given up anything.

I believe in what President Roosevelt is trying to do because I have seen with my own eyes how desperate the people of our country are.

New York, May 15, 1933

I'm going to have a child. I'm very ill; something happened to my spine. I don't understand how it could have happened. There have been X-rays, and three opinions, and they are all the same. I need you terribly. Please, Mother, come back.

We are moving to the new house. I will wire you in a few days.

New York, May 25, 1933

You tell me not to worry, that I'm perfectly healthy. I believe that, too, but I have lost my child. I feel so weak, so bewildered. It is hard to understand what has happened to me. I had the feeling of new life in me; it made me dizzy and ill, but that did not matter. What is a little discomfort when you feel you are really going to give life to another human being? When one has felt what I am trying to say to you, and loses it so suddenly, there is nothing left but utter despair. Some hours I feel that my courage has gone, too.

New York, June 15, 1933

Your letters are the only comfort I have. These days still seem like the end of everything. What strength I have goes into the smallest chore, like dressing. I have been trying to set the new house in some order, but I can't do much more than tell the maid what to do. There is a garden where I sit most of the day.

John has been getting his boat ready to sail. I'm going to try

to drive down to Oyster Bay next week and take a look at her. He has repainted the name from the *Liza D.* (his first wife) to the *Ione*. But isn't it bad luck to change the name of a boat?

We are supposed to sail for Europe in a few weeks. This trip is a usual thing each year for these people, as they go abroad to hunt in Scotland. I need your letters, Mother. Do write every day.

New York, June 28, 1933

In a few days we will sail for Europe. I'm stronger and I try to forget what has happened. John has promised he would take me to Paris for a few days. I know I'll feel better if I can see some of the things I love in that city. I want to look at the beautiful portrait by Ingres of La Belle Zélie, and I want to see the small portraits of Corneille De Lyon (in America there are so few canvases by this painter) and then . . . I want to walk through the Tuileries and the Luxembourg. Oh, I wish that you were coming with us. You say so many people depend on you. I often wonder why you ever chose such a thankless job as caring for poor people. Still, I think I do understand, because I have "part of you" in me. Only I would not have the patience to solve their problems in the way you do. There will have to be a sweeping change to give them some confidence again.

I won't ask you what you would like from Paris. I think I'll bring back the most foolishly beautiful thing I can find!

## *PART TWO*



EJERCITO DEL EBRO  
XV CUERPO DE EJERCITO

COMANDO EN JEFE

*Autorizo a Miss Jones.  
Robinson para que visite  
toda la zona correspondiente  
durante este tiempo  
de ejército.*

*P. L. 20. X - 38  
El Comandante Delegado*



*[Signature]*

Ref. 01-3/4



MINISTERIO DE DEFENSA NACIONAL  
COMANDO EN JEFE

Subsecretaría  
Secretaría

Se autoriza la libre circulación por toda la Región Catalana y sus frentes de guerra, del Este y del Ebro, de Miss IONE ROBINSON, acompañada de D. JUAN GILJALBO y SEÑORES, Director General de Comercio del Departamento de Economía de la Generalidad de Cataluña.

Las Autoridades Militares y fuerzas dependientes de las mismas, no pondrán impedimento alguno en la circulación de estos ciudadanos, en su visita a los frentes de guerra que se expresan.

Barcelona, 14 de Octubre de 1.938

EL SUBSECRETARIO,



*[Signature]*

FIRMADO A CORDON

Documents used by author in crossing front.

## CHAPTER XVI

Kirriemuir, Scotland, August 20, 1933

My dear Brother:

Even though I have walked far over these desolate moors, in quite the opposite direction, I can still hear them shooting. I don't think the end of the world could have kept these people from going ahead with their vacation; certainly my tragedy did not.

I was dressing for dinner, the first night we arrived in this faraway place in Scotland, near the North Sea, when John walked up softly behind me. He said he thought I shouldn't come down to dinner, that I looked pale and ill. Naturally, I laughed. I told him I not only was well, but was thrilled with my first dinner party in Scotland. Then he whispered, "No, you must not come down for dinner. Your mother and brother George are dead."

And then his mother came in. She was wearing a trailing lace dressing gown, and her face was very much in order for dinner. Her blue hair looked so blue against the deep red walls of my room. I will never forget the way she bent over me, and gave me one of her dry kisses on the back of my neck, placing a quart of whiskey (at the same time) on my dressing table. And then they both went away. I could not speak nor cry.

I could not believe what John had said—could not believe that he had learned of it before we left London. Yet he must have. He could not have heard it since our arrival here. Why had he not told me? When I thought of all this, I lost all confidence I had left in any one of these people. Keeping my cable from me was more than wicked. It was not done to spare my feelings, but for fear that I would have insisted upon returning at once to America, if I had known it in London.

I have never been faced with death . . . alone in my room I could see Mother's face smiling at me, so young and beautiful—just as always. And poor George! He was only eighteen months older than I. . . .

And then it seemed my head was filled with rushing water. I suddenly lost all reason. I found myself screaming and they came back. I cried bitterly and pleaded with them to let me take the long voyage home; but they left me and went downstairs to dinner.

Soon one of the maids came into the room. She was very tall, with glowing blue eyes, and she stood so quietly near the fire looking at me. She told me not to be afraid of death and crossed the room and sat beside me on the bed, stroking my head. She begged me to put on my sweater and coat. And then she took me down a long stairway in the back of the house and told me to go out on the moor, where no one could hear me, and cry my grief out. She whispered that she knew what death was, for those we love, saying that grief in one's heart must run its course—to the end.

I walked through the purple heather on the moor, without knowing where I was going, until I could walk no further. I lay down, burying my face in the heather. I dug my hands deep into the earth, seeking security in its touch. Mother had always told us there was a divineness in all that was part of nature and of the earth.

During these summer months there is a peculiar long twilight in Scotland. It lasts almost until midnight, and one can sometimes see the Northern Lights. They were very clear that night, and because I realized for the first time that there is a power greater than anything we know, I felt some peace within myself. Great sorrow, like great love, goes far beyond us. When we feel it, we can find no consolation in mortal beings, and long for the compassion of God.

When I walked back towards the house, I stood for a long time in the garden, looking up into the lighted dining room. I watched the dinner being served, and thought about the days that had just passed in London with these people. The gay shopping trips about London; Mother Dallett with her long lists, in front of the counter at Fortnum and Mason, buying all sorts of delicacies to be shipped up to Scotland; her fussiness

over the silver she rented; John and I racing up the long stairs at Claridges; Mother Dallett and Auntie Julie sitting on the gilded chairs in their drawing room, sipping champagne. God . . . they were good actors, every one of them. They had known all the time.

Now their cold composure is no longer an act. It is quite too calculated, as there is a lot of money involved in this grouse shooting. I begged so often to leave. If I had money of my own, I would walk to the village and never return. . . .

Oh, Freddie, will you ever forgive me? My suffering and their forcing me to stay here have made a wound so deep that I can never regain my confidence in them—not even in John, who has no will of his own around his mother.

I have walked and walked alone over this countryside. The endless moors, covered with the purple heather, seem more like the sea than the earth. The village of Kirriemuir is poor and forlorn. The people work in the linen mills. Their houses are built of gray stone, low to the earth; the children, with their eternal black smocks, stand in the doorways knitting all day long.

Yesterday I sat for quite awhile in the little house where Sir James Barrie was born. It looks like a doll's house, and his bed seemed so small. He must have been a very little boy. I remember how Mother used to read to us from *The Little Minister* and *Peter Pan* and a *Window in Thrums* (I have seen the house of Thrums, and the window). These few curious things somehow bring me back home.

I am passing the days, waiting to come to you. We are alone now, you and I. Whatever I wanted to do in this life I wanted to do for Mother. In her death, I feel I have lost part of myself. . . .

The other day the game-keeper asked me to walk up the morning drive with him. We sat in the cold shooting box looking out over the country. He told me to try shooting at the birds when they were coming head on; and because I killed a few, the thing that has happened to us was relived all over again. During the lull for lunch, I watched everyone eating from the shining



silver, with the low, white-covered table, and the servants so correctly dressed, and wondered about the coldness of these people. I wondered about it all over again when I saw the braces of dead grouse laid across the front lawn in the evening. No one who knew Mother could enjoy this sort of thing now. Even though you are alone these days, you at least have those who loved her around you.

I await another cable from you. I know only that it was Angeles Crest. That is a very high mountain. I hope that death came quickly. You will have to suffer again in telling me about it, but this will be the only way to blacken out my imagination.

Mother had no fear of death—she often spoke of leaving us children one day, and asked me always to look after you.

## CHAPTER XVII

40 Bank Street, New York, October 3, 1933

Dear Brother:

I find myself waiting and waiting to write. The telegrams are about all that I have been able to send.

I finally know the truth; John showed me the clippings on the way to London, when we were at last coming home. I read that there were six people in her car, and the other four are alive . . . I don't understand. It has set my mind to wondering. Is it true, as some believe, that death for us all is predestined? Why should it have been George and Mother? They were in separate seats in the car. I know the place on the mountain so well, and when I read how the bodies were taken from the canyon in baskets fixed on cables, and that the road hog who killed them has never been found—oh, Freddie, one needs to be brave.

Among all the letters waiting for me here, I found one from Dad. He sounds like a broken man. Because I have scarcely heard from him throughout the years, and as he and Mother lived apart since we were children, what he writes is pathetic. Naturally, he does not understand why I didn't come home, and he speaks about the strange cables (which I never sent) that you received.

He tells me that you have taken the "blow on the chin, doing all the many things necessary, like a man grown." He says it was merciful that Mother was killed instantly because she was crushed badly, and tragic that poor George had to linger on in the hospital for six hours. Our brother had such a struggle with his health in life; it is a pity that he had to go that way.

Freddie, you must come to me as soon as possible. Dad still wants me to come home, but I am too ill to make the trip, and it seems there is nothing left to be done. I have plenty of room in this house of ours, and having you with me will make it seem less lonely. When I went away, many things had not been completed. I was to have come home to a "bride's house." Now I

can't look at the many lovely things I was so thrilled to buy before we sailed.

I have found among the books that Mother sent to me an extraordinary letter in an old diary of mine. To come across it in this childish journal, while flipping back the pages, was a shock; but after I read it, it gave me a deep comfort. It seemed almost that she was speaking to me once again. Of course, I know it must have worried her—that journal—as I had written rather secret thoughts in it—thoughts not very pleasant to read. They had to do with the bitterness I felt over certain things I had done simply to be an artist. Of course, Mother didn't want to believe them. This is what she wrote:

Los Angeles, Jan. 11, 1933

My darling little girl:

In packing your books tonight I found this book of confessions. I read them, afraid to read on, and still, as your mother, wanting to learn of your real worth. After reading it I knew the contents were not true, but realized youth must color life (perhaps not as an artist but as one hoping to attract attention). I do not know when you will read these words, even as you never expected me to read yours. But know this: I am sure years will pass before you find this message. First, I love you, I believe in you. I know you will have found yourself long before now, and values will have changed.

I have lived and suffered, loved and lost, but I have always had you in my life: a spiritual blessing for which I have tried to qualify as a mother and a woman. I have found equity in life in sacrifice for you. I believe in a divine power for good, also in progression in this world and hereafter, and know the impulses you then possessed have been cleansed and lifted to a blue flame of divine life and love.

If I have left you in this world when you find this book, know, believe, and realize I shall be with you always, even as I have been in life.

With everlasting love and protection,

Mother

New York, April 1, 1934

Dear Brother:

The weather is still cold in New York. When I think how you hated this city and all the east, I'm glad that you're home again. But I am glad for more reasons than the weather. I realize your life would have been a mess if I hadn't urged you to return to the west.

It might have been different if you had been able to enter some college here. I understand, as you know, about the examinations. Your life has been uneven and hard since you were a little boy. The things that you failed in are not so important, except for the fact that they kept you from entering a university. These things are not so important in making a life.

You have so many fundamental talents; I will never worry about you. And your character—I am proud of that, too. You are strong and straightforward, with that simple gaiety and kindness that seems to be the best qualities of most westerners.

One of the hardest decisions I ever made was to insist upon your going home. I realized, long before we spoke of this, that your life would become completely distorted if you remained in New York. You will understand what I mean. There is too much moral destructiveness involved in these people. They don't realize it, as their sense of values is entirely colored by money.

Long before I married John he confessed to me that he hated his mother. When he said it (it was so out of the blue) I was shocked. Since our marriage I have never been able to understand their incredible relationship; and because I want so much to love my husband, this merry-go-round of falseness is taking my strength.

The contradiction of my present life reminds me of my marriage to Joe; even though it is different, it is fundamentally the same. The adored son who hates, and at the same time loves his family's life; who tries desperately to sever himself from them, but at the same time knows the comforts of home are necessary to him. Joe, from Flatbush, Brooklyn, turned to Communism to

adjust his frustrations. John, from Park Avenue, turns to speak-easies and Bohemianism. I hated the first, and I despise the second.

I don't have to describe some of the people who come to see us (you will agree). The person I'm beginning really to dislike is Mother Dallett. I have never had such a strong feeling against any woman in my life. I have tried to reason with myself, but the more I cover up my feelings, the harder it is to control them. It's that cold artificiality, the blue hair, the pulled eyebrows, her expensive French gowns and her scorn for any clothes made in America. There is rarely a moment in her conversation or conduct that a bit of humanness enters. Any confidence she wants to regain she always buys with an expensive gift.

I understand John perfectly, and I can understand why he "ran" down here to Greenwich Village, and why he likes to roam the countryside in dirty, torn clothing. It is all an escape, but in reality there is no escape. He is bound by weakness to the things he is trying to run from.

If I were Dostoevski, I would write the story of this family. It is "ingrained," and an unfortunate gathering of souls. Everyone is at cross purposes. Yes, we all really ought to explain what we are doing, trying to live together. Some days I think it is a spiritual blessing that Father Dallett is deaf. He is the one who possesses something; he is not in rebellion because he is spared from hearing cold, irrelevant words.

Already I have been reproached about your dentist bill. I could not bear to see you suffering with that horrible case of trench mouth; but it exasperated me when you would let John urge you to take a drink, ruining the work of the dentist.

No . . . I am not sad that I sent you home. You were like a fish out of water back here. Now, even though you struggle to live, it will be in your own environment. Seeing the country you love will help you to pull through your loneliness, more than the life you would have had with me.

Oh Freddie, I love you dearly. I love the way you can still laugh, even when you are sad. Mother had this quality. Her wit

made life delicious. Never lose your laughter. In spite of the many hours of suffering while I listened to you talk out your heart over that terrible accident, I have had moments of joy with you over the "old ladies," and the things that you said about this city.

I have been going through that trunk that belonged to Mother. It is a strange assortment of possessions that you brought to me. Most of the contents were letters that I wrote to her, and there are others belonging to you and George, and photographs of us all.

I am deeply moved that you gave me the pocketbook that Mother was carrying that hot August day. The pale rose beige of her purse and the few personal articles are Mother—even that license to carry a concealed firearm for protection while working at night. Poor darling!

40 Bank Street, New York, May 28, 1934

Dearest Brother:

Things have been going from bad to worse . . . during these last weeks I have suffered much physical pain in my spine. I can't sit, lie down, or walk without feeling that someone is bending my back like a curved bow, and that it will suddenly snap in two. Other times it seems as though there are no bones at all—only a sharp, constant pain towards the end of the spine which makes me so nervous I can't concentrate on anything.

A few weeks ago Dr. Darrah at the Medical Center decided that I should be put into a plaster cast. I had no idea what this would mean; I went calmly into the hospital, thinking I would merely stay in bed with some sort of strappings on my back. Instead, I was incased in wet plaster, which dried like heavy cement around my body. It seemed worse than any prison, because I could not move.

You have often heard of some people becoming panicky in small rooms. Well, this plaster cast made me feel that way.

When I was not crying I tried to draw on a piece of paper that the nurse tacked on a board suspended over my head; but whatever I tried to do only made me more miserable.

At night . . . oh, the nights were long and frightening! I would wake suddenly, not knowing where I was, and then I would feel the hard plaster, and still not realizing what I was doing, I would try to sit up in bed, only to become aware once again that I was caught like one in a trap.

You have seen pictures of men in the desert, thirsting for water and dreaming that they see clear blue pools of sparkling water? Well, it was almost like that, lying alone at night in that heavy white cast. I could only think of people walking, running, dancing. And then I would see people who were not able to do these things, and a cold fear would grip me. I imagined I would be one of them—a cripple.

Dr. Darrah, who is a kind and wonderful man, must have realized what was happening to me, for he came one afternoon and ordered the thing to be broken off. He said I was young, and might have a chance to get better without this drastic treatment.

The day he chipped away the plaster, like a sculptor, I lay in bed feeling as though I had dreamed some horrible nightmare. I had become so thin, and it seemed when I touched myself, that it was not myself at all—I had changed so very much.

The day after he took off the large cast I was taken downstairs. There another mixture of wet plaster was poured on me (while I stood) from the waist down to the beginning of my thighs. When it had settled and become solid, it was taken off like a shell, and a brace was made from the form inside this shell, with certain corrective inserts added. Now I walk and sleep like one with a heavy load on his head. I can't move from the one position.

John's mother reproached me the other day for marrying her son, if I had such a condition. I didn't know what to say to her. Whatever happened to me happened suddenly last spring. I don't know, any more than the doctors, what is wrong.

Woodstock, N. Y., June 14, 1934

I have come back to this village, like a sick dog wanting to go home. I thought that if I forced myself to be near painters whom I know, it would distract my mind from my spine. I had thought that, without asking, John would spend this one summer with me; but when he refused, I begged to go some place in the country. I am not able to go sailing with John, as the movement of the boat would be impossible to bear. He says he'll spend some time with me here later, but I know how he loves his boat. . . .

It is still early in the morning; already the day is frightfully hot. The mailman brought me two letters: one from John and one from you. John writes a sweet letter; it means so much to me right now. Even trying to paint is pretty much of a pretense. He asks me why I don't write to him, but I am so miserable and I know he would not understand. You ask me to sign an enclosed paper and return it immediately. I hope this will end all these affairs of death.

I have not been in Woodstock for years. It has changed completely. Most of the people are arty, but not artists. I'm living in the studio of George Bellows. It's a beautiful room to work in, and there's a view of one lone mountain through the north-light window. Bellows built this studio himself; it is near the house where he lived with his family for so many years. Now Mrs. Bellows only comes back to the house in the summertime. Sometimes I can hear her laughter, and I envy her buoyant spirit.

Sitting in front of my easel day after day in this studio, I think about George Bellows a great deal. He was one of the most magnificent painters of our country, and died too young. If I were a foreigner, I would learn about America simply by looking at the paintings and lithographs of George Bellows. They are so full of enthusiasm and life. I have heard many painters criticize his oil paintings. They say his color is too "black" and that his lithographs have more color than his paintings. I have heard this frequently expressed about painters who have a great facility for drawing in black and white. I think this



the President. He is the one person in the world who makes me feel assured. The more I speak about this, the more I alienate the Dallett affections. They hate Roosevelt as though he were a demon, as though he were actually responsible for these difficult days. Of course, I suppose this is happening in many families throughout our country. It's as if the Civil War had started all over again. It's natural I should be on his side, because of my background. The only way I could oppose him would be if I suddenly turned into the very opposite of what I am. I can see quite clearly, on the other hand, why his enemies hate him; and I can see very plainly what they want.

It's a pity that Mother is not alive to have heard his speech last night, as it dealt with all the things she worked for and dreamed of. At last it seems there is going to be some permanent plan of relief, supported by the government, to put the people back to work; and in the work they do, they will in a sense be reconstructing and rebuilding our country.

I have never thought so much about the world in which we live as I have this last month, nor realized how divided our country is becoming. It is this individual squabbling among one's friends that has made me wonder if, as the Communists say, we are headed for the "World Revolution."

You and I are too young to know anything about the World War. Some days I feel the reason I do not understand these times in which we're living is because my generation was not a part of the war.

Woodstock, N. Y., July 31, 1934

In this brace I'm beginning to feel like one of the ladies of the Middle Ages locked in her chastity belt. I should not even try to be funny in writing to you about this. As thin as I am, this brace makes me look heavy and all out of proportion. The pain in my spine is still the same; it doesn't seem to be getting any better. I walk very little; most of the time I lie on the lawn

beside the studio watching the Bellows girls entertain their friends.

In your last letter you write that you are still unable to find any steady employment, and the uncertainty of what you will do next week is the thing that makes you discouraged. When you say that there are too many foreigners in the States, and that is the reason we have so few jobs for "pure Americans," as you call yourself, I don't agree. The reasons for the depression in our country are far deeper than you imagine. We are like tiny fish caught in a great wave that seems to be washing over most of the world.

The strike in San Francisco sounds alarming. I can't imagine that city gripped in a general strike. You blame it on the Communists; you say they are back of it all. Strikes could lead to something serious, as we certainly have plenty of seeds sown over the country by both the Fascists and the Communists. Here in the east the Communists are enthusiastic about the strike in San Francisco because they feel the American people are becoming politically conscious of the real tyrants—meaning the Capitalist bosses. On the other hand, the Fascists are on the side of the bosses and reactionary people with money who hope to find a strong leader—one who will clean out the liberals and the leftists.

As serious as the San Francisco strike is, you should be glad workers have the right to strike; and you should believe that there will be a way to set our country back on its feet without, as you wrote, dumping all the foreigners into the sea.

## CHAPTER XVIII

New York, August 27, 1934

When I returned to New York unexpectedly, I did so because I felt that something was going on. John's too few week-end visits had made me realize this. And when I walked into the house I walked into one of those lost generation, Ernest Hemingway scenes. I left the room and went upstairs. Soon I heard John's friends falling against the banisters and then the door slammed. They were still singing in front of the house.

When I came downstairs, John was raging. He told me to take my things and go away. When he said this, something inside me snapped. I was so exhausted, so weak, and the thought of being alone terrified me.

I know this trouble with my spine and this horrible brace are repulsive to my husband. He seems to lack any feeling for my suffering. I don't think he really loves me. When you love someone deeply, these unfortunate happenings bring people closer together. When I married him he was the person who was lonely, who needed help. Circumstances have turned the situation around; now I am the one who needs help.

I have taken off the brace and have hidden it away in the top of my closet. I don't know what to do any more. I'm afraid to tell the doctor about the constant pain, for I know he'll tell me I must go back to bed in that cast. And I'm afraid to say anything to John, for fear he will fly into a rage. I can't go to his mother. Some hours I wish that I were dead. . . .

In your last letter you tell me that, in spite of the difficulties of finding work in the west, you would rather stay there, because at least the people speak English. Really, I don't know what to say. Your life is a constant worry to me—not that you are worse off than thousands of other young Americans. . . . It is the conflicting ideas that are on the loose in our country that make me anxious about you.

Whatever you do, don't get mixed up with any of those

"Silver Shirts" in California; I'm afraid some day you might, the way you're thinking.

New York, September 30, 1934

It has been a cold, windy day. The sun came out for awhile late this afternoon. I'm sitting here by the fire, quite alone in this house, writing to you. It is this way practically every evening. The telephone does not even ring to say that he will be late for dinner, and I—I am such a fool. I wait and wait until the candles have burned low on the dining room table and the food is cold.

Yesterday an old friend told me that I was very stupid to believe my husband's absences were innocent. This shock, when I needed him so terribly, was more than I could bear. I could feel myself slipping. I had tried so hard to adapt myself to him, to build my life around his. And because I found it hard, so very hard, to accept his life, I now felt I had lost everything I had wanted to be and whatever I was trying to be now. I could see nothing ahead.

To escape my own unhappiness, I try to focus all my attention on the events that are happening in our country, and as they are so mixed up, I'm afraid to open your letters. Here in New York there seem to be more and more hungry and unemployed. Former President Hoover made the Dallett family feel better the other day by writing a terrific attack on the New Deal. He says the American people are faced with the issue of losing their "human liberty." But tonight Roosevelt retaliated by saying America was moving forward to a greater freedom, to greater security for the average man, than have ever been known before in our history.

This afternoon Jean Charlot, the painter (who is having a difficult time, too), told me that he believed the chaotic state of the world today is due to a lack of religious faith in the people. Charlot is a devout Catholic. He has always told me that I should learn to pray, that only in prayer can one find any consolation from the miseries of this world.

Stockbridge, Massachusetts, October 30, 1934

When I came up here from New York, I thought the long hours of driving through this New England country would never come to an end. I thought, too, that I would be lost forever if I could not see Dr. and Mrs. Riggs again. They always told me that I could always come back to them if anything ever happened to me. Knowing that there was one place I could return to was the thing that saved me from God only knows what.

I never realized that I had reached the end of whatever endurance, both physical and mental, I had left within myself until the day I could not seem to feel or reason any more. It was as if I had fallen suddenly into an intense darkness. I felt the same terror that a child feels when he is locked into a dark closet.

Now that I am beginning to feel better again, I know that a breakdown was inevitable. Perhaps if I had known more about the things I am learning here now, I could have been spared the mental anguish of this upheaval. I know what has brought it on, but I have made up my mind that I will make every effort to accept things, as they involve other people—people I cannot change or cut away from. I never realized before how human beings can tear each other to pieces, how emotional conflicts begin to destroy one's purpose in living.

When I lived with the Riggs family before my marriage, I used to laugh at the thought of anyone having a nervous breakdown. I thought such a state was something reserved for the idle rich. Certainly I never imagined such a thing could ever happen to me. Now I find myself one of these unhappy human beings who have been pulled away from the world. We are all like babies, wanting to find security. Because I love Dr. and Mrs. Riggs and have had personal contact with the other doctors in this Sanatorium, I find it doubly hard to walk past the windows of the Riggs home and down the path to the loneliness of my room in the Sanatorium.

The head nurse is an old friend of mine. She looks at me with understanding sympathy. Often I feel I would like to cry in her arms. If Mother were alive, this never would have happened to me. I could have told her everything honestly, little by little, and I know she would have helped me to recover the confidence I was losing in myself.

Now that I am one of them, I understand the people in this place a little better, even though no one is allowed to speak to another patient about his troubles. I can tell from the strained expressions on their faces that all of them are lost within themselves for some reason or other. There is a little gray-haired man from Philadelphia, a watchmaker, who cries when he hears music, and one young girl who never walks without a nurse. There is also a brilliant man with whom I could speak about painting; but this is too much of an effort for me now. His father held a high cabinet post in our country at one time. I keep wondering why this man is here. It is the same with everyone—this curiosity.

I have made friends with a young Frenchwoman with large brown eyes, whose laugh sounds like a bell. In the afternoons I go walking with her over the hills. Marie has been trying to teach me the French song, *Parlez moi d'amour*. I don't know why I'm learning the words—but they still do sound lovely in that language!

When I first came here I was afraid to walk more than a few blocks; it seemed as though the tall trees beside the road were going to fall away from their roots. But now these trees look quite lovely again; I'm not afraid they will fall. And the sensation of being shut up within myself is beginning to leave me, too.

The days are very disciplined. We get up at seven, take exercises, and then have breakfast. After breakfast we study one of a series of pamphlets written by Dr. Riggs. Later there is an hour's conference with the doctor, and then a short walk, lunch, and back to one's room for a rest. In the afternoons I work in the

carpenter shop; after this, another walk, then dinner. After dinner I sit in front of the fire and knit.

I have never lived like this in my life. At first the very simplicity of it irritated me. Now I feel that I could go on forever in this protected manner. I have lost all my ambition.

Dr. Richardson, my doctor, says he was not surprised to see me ill, because he thinks I have never lived a balanced life. He says I am too intense in one direction, meaning painting. And he believes I am a rebel in my thinking. He says one should always stay in the middle of the road, learn tolerance, and accept whatever comes along. If you don't agree, then pretend you have a big wastebasket, and throw what you don't want into it. He tells me I must accept, too, the pain in my spine; that I must try to ignore it. I have been learning about maladaptation and efficiency in one's life.

That is the only thing that makes me laugh a bit these days—having Dr. Richardson explain the world to me. I could never agree with him, even if I were well. But there is much common sense in what he has to say, and I suppose it is foolish to worry too much about things one can never change.

40 Bank Street, New York, December 1, 1934

When you receive this letter you will be glad to know that I'm home again. I returned for Thanksgiving Day. Oh, how happy I am to be home, even though I still feel a bit shaky.

You have just passed your twenty-second birthday. I hope that the present I sent to you arrived in time. To have you growing up into a man makes me feel like a very old lady. You have developed so fast, and with your tallness, it seems that we are of the same age. When we were children, the difference was so much greater that even now you always remain a little boy in my mind.

I can see by the continual drawings you make on your letters that you have real talent, and when you ask me if I think you should become an artist, what am I to say? This is something

you must feel within yourself. It is rather like falling in love, this wanting to be an artist. It begins so slowly that one is hardly conscious of what is happening, until one day it comes, like a mad rush of water: a longing to create. It's as though your eyes had been opened for the first time. You see beyond what the average man can see. There is an almost inhuman joy when one has drawn or painted a thing which he knows is good.

I believe it is easier for a man to be a painter. When a man who is an artist loves a woman, the woman submerges herself completely to help him with his work. In the case of a woman painter, it is not the same. In being a woman, she is nearly always divided between her work and the one she loves.

The other day I made myself go to see the large Van Gogh exhibition at the Modern Museum. It was an ordeal. Behind each canvas I was seeing the tortured face of this unhappy soul. Oh, why must artists live such miserable lives? Van Gogh believed that there should be some syndicate for painters, to help solve their economic difficulties. His ideas were more or less identical to Rivera's, though of course he was not in the least the kind of political actor Diego is.

After the Van Gogh show, I walked over to the Julian Levy Gallery to see the exhibition of the Spanish surrealist, Salvador Dali. He has a superb technique, but his subject matter is either the result of distorted dreams . . . or he is a shrewd faker, wanting to attract attention.



## CHAPTER XIX

40 Bank Street, New York, May 28, 1935

My dear Brother:

I cannot even ask forgiveness for the long silence. When I think of you, I know that you have much to face in your own life, and as my own has become so desperate, I cannot bear to see my thoughts written on paper. I say to myself, Freddie will somehow survive . . . and somehow I will pull through.

I told you in a short note that I was going to have a child. I was frightened at first, because always the doctors told me I never could have a baby. Now for the first time in my life I have been trying to learn how to pray, and because I feel the sensation of another life within me, I have learned to believe really in God.

It is strange, thinking of God. I never realized how conditioned people are to accepting him as a weak-looking man with a soft brown beard, sad eyes, and bare feet, and how constantly you read in the Bible about the fear of God. I could never feel that way about this image of God I keep seeing.

When I close my eyes, I try to change him into another pictorial image; but as I have seen so many stereotyped God-faces, I find myself questioning whether such a man ever lived and walked on the shores of Galilee. Whether he did or didn't is unimportant. The thing that is important is that one would like to believe that mortal men could be filled with the love and compassion of a Christ. When we feel love and compassion in other human beings, it is like breathing deeply and feeling oneself free from all fear.

40 Bank Street, New York, August 15, 1935

I have been practically alone the whole summer. Oh Freddie what am I to say? Because of my weakness, morally, unfortunately at this time I need to lean on those near me. I am that much of a coward to write this. Perhaps it is my own fault. As

an artist I have always lived too much in dreams, and suddenly in this first real test of life, I find myself needing the one who has given me the life I now feel within me . . . even though he has grown apart . . . day by day, because he feels his own happiness is not "with us". . . .

40 Bank Street, New York, October 3, 1935

Today is my twenty-fifth birthday. No one has remembered, and no one cares. But the landlady next door came to see me this morning, with a book of Mother's that I had carelessly thrown away. She said, "I know you are alone, and I know your Mother would have liked me to save this book for you." The landlady had taken it from the rubbish, can you imagine?

I remember when Mother sent me this volume about our Santa Monicas called, "These Waiting Hills." She had written on the title page, "Mother and these Waiting Hills are waiting for your return." I was mad then because I thought she was deliberately trying to make me homesick. Now I am ashamed that I ever threw it away. Today I opened it and read the chapter on "Tomorrow."

"Is it wise to attempt prophecy in a country where one's prediction is half fulfilled or half refuted before a few pages can be sped through the press? Perhaps not. But the temptation is great. Let us have our fling at painting these hills as the future will find them". . . .

Oh Freddie, I only hope that if you are ever terribly unhappy you will be able to draw strength from the things of our country that you love. I feel so beaten by one individual, and whatever I have left that makes me strong, comes from the earth that I remember as a little girl. I am glad, terribly glad I am a westerner. Everything that we have been born to see is new and vital . . . just like our hills. They aren't worn and tired! Nothing that has happened will ever take the vitality away from me that the west has given me. I feel like the Santa Monicas, half fulfilled, and no one will ever "refute" me before I have finished with myself.

40 Bank Street, New York, November 4, 1935

I am trying to arrange for a divorce. I wrote to Mr. Pugibet in Mexico, and he wants me to bring the baby and come there immediately. I know that I cannot leave now. I am still too weak. Nevertheless, just looking at the Mexican stamps on the letter brought me some cheer. I have been trying to say to myself that I am still young; that I am still an artist, with my whole life before me. I am trying to blot out these days, trying to pretend they are just a bad dream; that I can erase these years and go back to where I left off before I ever knew these people existed.

40 Bank Street, New York, November 6, 1935

Two months have passed since my little girl was born. She is so perfect, so beautiful. I should be the happiest of mothers. . . . During this time in my life when I should be filled with joy, I am living through days of bitter loneliness, and experiencing a cruelty that makes my blood run cold. I only know that time heals the deepest wounds, and for the sake of my child I hope to be brave.

I am still terribly weak; it is even an effort to walk up the stairs. I spend long hours sitting by the window looking down into the street. . . . If only I could talk to the baby—but then, I'm glad she's too little ever to remember these days.

Yesterday afternoon, when I had an unexpected visit from the Mexican painter, David Siqueiros, and another young artist, Antonio Pujol, I was glad they came. I am ridiculous enough to want to hang on to the past—to steady myself now and try to think of myself as an artist, rather than as a married woman.

David sat near the fire talking to me until it was far past dinner time. Half the time I couldn't even answer the questions he asked because I was thinking of my own troubles. When I would force myself to laugh now and again over some fantastic thing he had said, I found myself crying, but David thought my tears were laughing tears.

His green eyes kept shifting from one object in the room to another. He believes that the era of studio painting has come to an end in our lifetime. He said that artists must find new materials, that they should utilize the products of the twentieth century, such as cement and plywood, in place of canvas. He almost shrieked as he told me that mere brushes were completely passé; that an artist should paint with an air-gun filled with duco automobile paint!

When the nurse brought the baby downstairs, he couldn't believe that I had a daughter. He wanted to touch her tiny hands and stroke her head . . . but I wouldn't let him come close. I don't think David knows where he is half the time, he lives in such a world within his own head. He was wearing his same old black leather windbreaker, with great smears of paint down the front, and his hair was very long, curling around the collar of his jacket.

Siqueiros talks like a Biblical prophet interpreting some divine message. He told me that I would be completely lost unless I identified myself with the "World Struggle"; that people had no right to live for themselves. As I had hardly spoken a word during these hours, I wondered how he had come to his conclusions about me. When I asked him this, he looked about the room with scorn, and went on talking about his workshop and air-guns.

During this visit, Pujol sat very quietly in front of the fire. I shall always remember the way he looked, dressed in bright green corduroy trousers and a belt inlaid with fiery red glass stones which caught the reflection of the firelight, like tiny danger signals along a highway.

In Pujol's eyes was the melancholy look that all the Indians in Mexico have. I could tell from the fine hair on his chin that he had never shaved; it was still the first puppy fuzz. Pujol was born in a small village near Mexico City. When I first knew him he was selling fruit in the Merced Market and drawing a few hours each day in the San Carlos Academy. He became a Communist a few weeks after he enrolled in the Academy, and

now he is supposed to be one of the most brilliant young Marxist pupils. When Pujol speaks, he is like a young priest, just ordained; but instead of holy words and phrases, his sentences are filled with Marxist jargon. He never speaks about painting; he is possessed with the suffering of "his race."

He told me that the only chance the Mexican Indians have to adapt themselves to life today is through Communism and Marxism, the only political ideology that eliminates race prejudice. He said that we Americans were hypocritical in believing "all people were created equal," because we act quite the opposite in several states in our country towards "his race."

This kind of talk left me feeling as though someone had slapped my face. I love their country and I love their sensitivity . . . but I don't like to feel that I am part of a sequence that has made the lives of these people miserable.

David has no conscience about the money he owes to the Hotel Albert. That was really why he came to see me—he never goes to see his friends unless he is in some difficulty. His troubles are always like a bomb, ready to explode. He told me every American has plenty to pay back to Mexico, because we stole so much of their territory! That is a wonderful way to get around paying rent, don't you think?

## CHAPTER XX

40 Bank Street, New York, January 3, 1936

In starting out the New Year, I would have liked to move away from this house. I can't do anything until I settle my affairs, which are in an awful mess. For the first time in my life I wish, oh, how I wish I were terribly poor—not involved with people who have money. Not that I think that all people with money are cruel, but certainly there are some who think they can kick people around because they can pay a price to do so.

I have tried to pick up the threads of my past these last weeks. I mean, I've been trying to see people whom I knew when I was a young girl. Most of them have been caught, just like yourself, in the frightful economic troubles of our country.

The artists who are without work during these times are suffering, perhaps, more than an ordinary worker. Even in normal times their lives were none too easy. Now many of them begin to feel very optimistic. They feel that all this chaos is going to bring about an American Renaissance, through the new relief art programs which have been started by President Roosevelt throughout the country.

Nearly everyone I know in New York is on one of these Art Projects and everyone, it seems, is beginning to paint on a wall! How I envy them, as that is what I have wanted to do for a long time in my own country. Now I am considered on the other side of the fence in the present scheme of things—simply because of the family I married into.

I have been trying to work at home, and I find myself scorning this room—just as Siqueiros said I would—because I am part of nothing. The other day I went to see David in his workshop. Because he realizes that I am alone and unhappy, he told me that I should try to forget myself and work with him and other artists. He has organized his own W.P.A. . . . but then, it is completely Communistic. David must have received some money from the Communist Party to pay for his automobile paint and air-brushes. He has about fifteen people working for him—very

miserable-looking young painters—and even though he tells them they are free to do what they want as painters, this is not the case. David designs every poster, panel, or picture this brotherhood works on. He really is an amazing person. His energy is like a wild bolt of lightning. His ideas are forceful, and he is clever in projecting them into the imagination of other artists, making them feel they have conceived them.

David has one boy cutting heads and other objects from magazines. These are placed in a lantern and enlarged on the plyboard; then someone else traces the forms, while someone else stands ready to blow on the duco with an air-gun! What a system! No one would ever need to be a draftsman. This way of painting, in fact, even eliminates the necessity of having the smallest bit of talent. All one has to have is the urge to think that he is an artist!

In spite of the trickiness of all this, David certainly is turning out some weird pictures. He is so brilliant and in a sense a genius. These air-brush designs have power. I would like to see him leave out the propaganda, but this is fundamentally what he is after, at the moment. He is turning out enormous posters for different unions, and he has several giant-like heads of Communist leaders that look like colored sculptures.

Siqueiros laughs at the W.P.A. Art Projects. He says all the painters in America are merely trying to do what was done in Mexico two decades ago: painting on the inside of buildings. He paced back and forth across the splintered, rickety floor of his workshop, while he rattled off in Spanish his ideas for street murals. He said that in "our time" people are too busy to walk into a building to look at murals, that they should be painted right out in the streets, and not with the old academic plastic forms. He has discovered a method of distorting forms to make them move with the eye as one walks past a wall. That is, certain parts of the composition would be exaggerated to increase certain forms in the composition and to hold one's eye, forcing it to follow the different subjects. Like a plane, flying on a beam!

I have been going about the city to look at the many murals

that have been started in different public buildings. It is incredible that so many young painters in our country who have never thought about painting on a wall are able to adapt themselves so quickly to this hard physical work. I am thrilled with what I have seen. In a sense, one does feel that a Renaissance has begun in our country. When you see so much talent "unleashed," it seems a pity that it never happened before.

40 Bank Street, New York, March 4, 1936

A few weeks ago, on February 14th, there was an outstanding meeting in Town Hall of an American Artists' Congress. Except for the fact that what was said had a broader sweep, it seemed that it might turn into the fulfillment of the dream Van Gogh had for the uniting of artists. Issues that face us all today—which of course never existed during the time of Van Gogh—were discussed.

Certainly a few years ago none of the artists present would have been able to speak about the things brought up the other night. It has taken the gradual impact of the depression to make them slowly wake up. If their stomachs were as well filled as they had been, they never would have taken time out to reflect about their futures. I could hardly believe my ears when I heard Stuart Davis (with whom I remembered dancing round the Bal de Nègres in Paris in 1928, with no thought in his head at that time except painting squares and cubes) say that artists had to seek a new grip on reality in order to withstand the severe shock of the crisis, and that few artists today could honestly remain aloof, wrapped up in studio problems.

The real core of this meeting was not the discussion of what is happening in an economic way in our own country. Each speaker stressed his fear of the growing power of Fascism throughout the entire world, and of the danger of another World War unless something was done to stop it. Paul Manship, the sculptor, said that when people believe there is no danger of Fascism in this country, they are not conscious of the great and inevitable



shaping of forces in that direction going on in the world today.

George Biddle, the painter, stated that the invitation to exhibit paintings at the Olympic Games in Berlin—to be sponsored by the Nazi government—directly challenges the professional code of ethics of American artists. He urged members to boycott the Olympic Games, and to refuse to exhibit in Germany, as a protest against spiritual intolerance and the suppression of free thought.

Max Weber spoke about the necessity of the artist for having greater opportunities to show his work. He felt an outstanding factor that must be considered in an effort to augment the artists' audience is the perplexing question of subject matter as influenced and colored by the new social consciousness.

Heywood Broun, the columnist, said that artists and writers should organize along the lines of trade unions; that the future of art in America would find new vitality through a closer contact with labor.

Rockwell Kent spoke about what he thought "Worth Fighting For." He said that artists should be active in movements against war, for artists, of all people in the world, are most concerned with life—that it was by virtue of their love for life that men were artists.

Since the day of that meeting I am no longer concerned solely with my own problems, and I know the other artists who were present feel the same. The other day Clemente Orozco, who came from Mexico as a delegate to this Congress, told me that he was not surprised that American painters were beginning to wake up to the world around them. Orozco said that art was a weapon more powerful than armed force; but he had no illusions about the future. He thought we were all headed for an awful struggle because no one really has tried to stop it.

40 Bank Street, New York, June 1, 1936

I have been included in what is called the non-relief personnel of the W.P.A. Art Project. My supervisor, Lou Bloch, first as-

signed me to assist a group of younger painters who are preparing walls for fresco. Before a painter can ever commence working on the actual wall, he must submit a carefully drawn sketch. This is passed on by a jury, usually consisting of the director of the building and officials of the projects.

I spent some time in the psychiatric wards over at Bellevue Hospital. What a three-ring circus that place is! None of the doctors want the hospital walls painted, and they do everything possible to stop the work. But of course they can't because this is a building that belongs to the city.

On the Project at Bellevue there are two Mexicans painting walls: Emilio Amero and Luis Arenal. Arenal got himself in trouble the other day. At the last moment, when he was completing one of his panels, he changed a banana tree to a papaya. This gave the director of the hospital a chance to have the entire wall whitewashed, since Arenal had deviated from his original design.

The doctors didn't want Amero's fresco on their walls, either. He is painting, with great care, two stylized white horses on each side of the doorway. The doctors say these horses don't look like horses to them, and that if their patients see such distorted forms they will never get well.

Your little niece is beginning to grow some hair at last. It is very white. Every day when I come home from work I make a pencil drawing of her. These days are terribly hot, and as I have not worked so steadily for a long time, I'm tired enough to go to bed with the baby when I come home.

40 Bank Street, New York, July 18, 1936

At last I'm going to work on a wall all my own. It is a long ride in the subway over to the place where this hospital is being built. Nevertheless, I'm terribly happy that I have a wall all to myself in Brooklyn. I have been working on the drawings. The subject has to do with harvesting. There is a group in the center: a man kneeling, while he opens the earth to place seeds in a fur-

row; a woman sitting beside him, her apron filled with seeds; a young child standing back of these two figures, with an ear of corn in his hands. At the left, the surface of the wall has been broken—I mean the composition. There is an interior of a stable, while on the far right of the wall a group of figures is harvesting the corn.

Mr. Bloch wanted me to paint over in the prison at Welfare Island, but after spending about a week wandering about that place with an escort of guards, I wouldn't consent to work there. I was never in a great city jail before. The prisoners are confined in steel cages, with no privacy whatsoever. It is just like an enlarged zoo.

I will never forget the long lines of artists waiting for their weekly W.P.A. checks this hot New York summer. Even though their immediate worries are taken care of, they are in a constant state of uneasiness for fear they will find themselves in the street again. Whatever happens in Europe seems more important than the events occurring in our country. They fear the President may be forced to stop the relief measures which he has instituted in the United States because reactionary forces in our country are still trying to make these measures appear like Communism, or Fascism.

Last Wednesday, when the English decided to remove their sanctions against Italy, it sent a feeling of foreboding through me. And yesterday a civil war broke out in Spain.

64 East 90th Street, New York, December 1, 1936

Even though what happened is over—finished for the time being—I will never be able to forget that I have been in a strike. Knowing how you feel about strikes, this may amuse you.

I can hardly remember where I was when it all started. I mean, it seemed to be a part of the day's work. I was asked to go to a meeting of the Artists' Union . . . of which I am not a member. During this last month there have been dismissals from the Art Projects. The artists who were dismissed were told they

could get W.P.A. jobs as laborers. They refused to accept this order, and the Artists' Union, to which many of them belonged, decided to make an issue of the matter.

A young sculptor, Paul Bloch, president of this Union, called a meeting, asking painters who might be influential to participate and support the painters who are about to lose their jobs. I had no idea we would be asked to go in a group to the Project offices, but when Bloch asked those present to do so, I knew I would go. Before the end of the meeting, he tactfully suggested that anyone not wishing to go to the Project could leave. It was quite a tense moment. Everyone seated turned his head, and eyes circled the room to see who would walk out. No one did. I stayed for two reasons. I knew the painters needed their jobs in order to live. I felt they were all doing good work on the Project, and I did not want to see it fold up as an idea that was no longer of value. I saw no reason why people with creative talent should be ditch diggers.

Two hundred and nineteen painters went up to the W.P.A. headquarters on 39th Street. We went up in the elevator in groups; some gathered inside the offices, while others waited in the hallways. I was included in the delegation which asked Mrs. Audry McMahon, the director of the Art Projects in New York, to use her influence immediately to stop this reclassification. She said that the matter was completely out of her hands, that it was a directive issued from Washington. Whereupon this young sculptor Bloch said that the artists were going to stay in those offices until their demands were met.

Then an official, the personnel director of the Project, a sandy-haired, cold-eyed official from Washington who certainly didn't care about art or artists and who obviously regarded everyone present as a relief worker on W.P.A., said that the artists were not being discharged—they were merely being transferred into labor projects. He said it was an official order and that everyone had better clear out, or the police would be called to eject us.

Well, the artists refused to go. Everyone sat down on the floor. The personnel director took out his watch. When a certain pe-

riod of time had passed, a door opened and in walked an enormous police captain. He told everyone to get up off the floor and start clearing out of the building. The artists stood up and locked arms like a daisy chain; and then the trouble began.

Police poured into the building. They were very systematic. They formed a line like a tug of war, grabbing men by the ties and girls by the coats, and then slowly they started moving back and forth. It was almost like a ballet, until the rhythm became violent—as if one were standing in a raging surf. Finally everyone was being knocked down, picked up, and shoved into the elevator. Down below in the street the Black Marias were waiting. We were all taken to the police station, but the courtroom wasn't large enough, so we were removed to one further uptown.

The judge looked very bewildered. The courtroom was jammed like a subway. And no one would give his correct name. When asked his name, one man would answer, "I am Rembrandt," another "I am Rubens," until all the old masters were exhausted and had to be used over again. By the time this was finished, there must have been twenty Rembrandts, Michelangelos, Raphaels, etc.

Two lawyers came to the defense of the artists: a young man named Martin Popper, and Rep. Vito Marcantonio. Finally, each one was given a suspended sentence and allowed to go home.

I will never see the wall I was to have painted on. My work was brought to an abrupt close the other day, along with the rest of the non-relief people. I would have given anything to have painted on that wall, although I can understand my own "pink slip." But it does seem an awful waste to have started these Art Projects and to have given a new vitality to young creative artists in our country, only to throw it all in the ash can. Our country is far too great. We should have some permanent Ministry of Fine Arts, where the talents of artists could be used to the advantage of the American people.

In a few weeks I will be leaving for Florida to settle my personal affairs. I have rented our new home for the three months' period I must live there.

## CHAPTER XXI

Sarasota, Florida, February 12, 1937

My dear Brother:

The morning I arrived in this southern resort town, I found myself not knowing where to go or how to begin this period of exile in order to be free again. I had delayed my coming because I did not want to consent to sign the papers involving my freedom; they seemed so unreasonable, after what has happened. However, I did sign eventually, after the papers were modified. I regret most the restrictions as to where I am to live in the future with my daughter. Now I will never be able to leave New York State more than three months of the year with her.

What do they mean, these legal phrases of "mental cruelty" or "incompatibility?" Why do people think they love, and what drives love away? I suppose it all adds up to what we have experienced as human beings. I only hope that when you fall in love you will never be hurt by the one you have married.

It is a terrible thing to destroy or to try to dominate people by material power alone, and when I say this, I have reason. I have seen both sides of this argument. To be an artist passing through life is one thing. To be a passenger through life is quite another. An artist wants to make a permanent record of something creative, while power and the possession of material things seem all-important for a passenger. In the case of John, I don't know what he really wanted (or what he expected of me). But now that this is over, I hope that he finds it—whatever it is.

Oh, how I long to come home. This homesickness is in the warm air—the orange trees—and the many flowers that are like the flowers that grow in California.

We are living in a tiny house, surrounded by tall pine trees. Over the porch of this house there is a narrow, oblong sign that swings in the wind, with the name *Pine Shadows* written across it. The rooms are small and ugly. The walls look as though Siqueiros had gone wild with his air-gun. There is a fireplace

that is not a fireplace, and the furniture is made out of a hard, dirty, mustard-colored wood.

The Ringling Brothers Circus is quartered here in Sarasota for the winter. It is rather startling to meet the "tallest man on earth" and the "fattest woman" right on your own village street.

Mr. Ringling must have been a great lover of art, as he has built a museum and an art school in this section of the city where I am living. I thought the museum looked like a pink Italian palace, and I was astonished to learn it actually is one, brought over piece by piece from Italy. Some days I walk there with the baby, and as we approach this low pink building, with its rows of classic sculptures of men and women standing on the roof, I half-close my eyes, making everything look fuzzy, and have a wonderful illusion that I am walking on the Roman *Compagna*.

Overnight from New York, I have found another world. No one cares about what is happening beyond the limits of this town. Grown people spend hours just walking along the beach picking up sea shells.

Through a letter, I have met Mr. and Mrs. David Grey. Mrs. Grey is an aunt of Mrs. Roosevelt. She is not a beautiful woman, but she possesses the most electric charm I have ever felt in a woman.

Through the Greys I met Honoria and Rex McVitty, whom I see nearly every afternoon. Honoria, in spite of being exceedingly tall, looks just like a walking Corot. Her face has such a pure expression that you feel she might perform a miracle at any moment. Honoria is a direct descendant of Robert Livingston, and she lives in the old Livingston house on the Hudson, not far from Hyde Park. Her husband Rex, an enormous Irishman, has found the secret of living, he thinks, by just having a good time. It seems he doesn't have to work, and he is never bored. He simply plays all day long like a little boy. For instance, he will start out in the morning, and laze around whatever place suits his fancy. He will head for the ocean, and then suddenly come across a shady tree, stop abruptly, park the car, and lie on the

ground under the tree—without ever giving another thought to where he was going originally. The other day I painted quite a good portrait of Honoria, in a bonnet that she wears constantly which looks like a beehive upside down.

I have a young boy named Ralph, tall and gangly, who poses for me each morning. The snooty people I have met in Sarasota call him a "cracker." The poor of the south are called "crackers." How biased some people are about the poor! Here in the south these "crackers" are regarded as we regard mongrel dogs.

This boy cracker of mine, Ralph, is not too bright, but he is very sweet. He plays the guitar, composing pretty and languid tunes. He said his heart is set on seeing New York . . . Broadway. I told him that if one wanted to do something enough in this world, there was only one thing to do: follow one's heart. Rex and Honoria said I would wreck his life if I encouraged him to go to New York. I don't agree. I would try to influence anyone to see more of the world than these long stretches of flat beaches and this sinister flat country, full of snakes and weird bayous.

Since I was forced into this humdrum life, I have been thinking about the turmoil back in New York—about the painters who are so agitated in their daily lives. I wrote to my friend Julian Levi, the painter, the other day, trying to convince him that perhaps an artist should cut himself off from as much turmoil as possible, and live for his painting with the same selfishness that a man lives for the woman he loves. I told Julian that I was beginning to feel I would like to be like Renoir, detached from the world, forever serene in a garden with my paint box.

Julian wrote back that Renoir's life was merely a reflection of his age, of the security and stability of the nineteenth century, and that was what made him a great painter. Julian said the nineteenth century was a good, safe world, where nothing changed much except aesthetic theories; that the only enemy on the horizon in those days was the philistine mind. Julian feels that Renoir understood his time and loved his people, and that we should do the same.



In that same letter Julian wrote that the reason Charles Laughton was so splendid in *Rembrandt* (a movie I saw before I left New York) was because of his faithful portrayal of the veracity and recklessness that was Rembrandt. Julian said that he actually left his own painting one morning to reread the lines from Ecclesiastes which Laughton had read so movingly:

"Vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labor . . . man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun . . . I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

In this isolated little house, alone with my daughter and her nurse (a dour old woman who will not lift a hand to help in the least thing; day after day she just sits in the garden, while I do the cooking, the washing, and the cleaning) I do wonder about the vexation of one's spirit, and the vanity which seems to be the largest portion of us all. Do our past experiences make us vain, or is it the dreams we bury deep in our subconscious, or perhaps the excitement of possessing material things? Certainly everyone's vanity is original and different. I doubt if there are any people without vanity in this world.

I will be glad when my time is finished here, as I am very unsteady and lost without the movement of the city. Solitude is only good when one has found peace in one's heart.

Do you think I will ever be able to love again? Mrs. Grey told me that people should never get married unless their hearts ache for each other when they are alone—like a new pair of shoes, pinching one's feet.

64 East 90th Street, New York, April 7, 1937

Returning to New York, I found the young painters in a state over the civil war in Spain. I'm ashamed to tell you that I have

remained quite on the outside, so far as reading the newspapers these last months is concerned. What appeared as a tiny rebellion in the beginning seems to be reaching the proportions of a civil war as fierce as the one which our own country once became embroiled in.

Almost everyone I know wants to go across the sea to that country. I was not surprised to learn that Siqueiros and Pujol went, especially Siqueiros, who would go anywhere for excitement. The painter, Harold Lehman, told me that Siqueiros was going to paint posters for the Spanish Republican Ministry of Propaganda. When I told Harold I planned to go to France this summer, he almost hated me. He said that no artist had the right to sit by his easel with such a fire raging as this Spanish one.

I understand Siqueiros' and Pujol's attitude about Spain. They have a direct blood tie with that country. When I was in Mexico, I remember the day this new Spanish Republic was born. Overnight, the old hate towards Spain disappeared in the Mexicans. They were like long-lost children wanting to go home.

## CHAPTER XXII

Samois, France, July 20, 1937

I am here in France—beginning the first of many lonely summers away from my little girl—living in a small house on the rim of a hill rising straight up from the River Seine. These long days are peaceful and quiet here in this village of Samois. I rarely go into Paris, and when I do, it is only to walk through the grounds of the Exposition, or through the Louvre.

This morning I went into the city on the first bus. I spent the day looking at hundreds of paintings, which is really a foolish thing to do. It leaves one's head swimming, and you feel that there is no use in painting another picture. On the way back to the country this evening I rested my head on the back of the bus seat and thought of you. I regret my laziness in not writing. But when you have a brush in your hand all day long you are too tired to move a pen in the evening. Really, I have been working hard.

I wish you could be here in France with me this summer. The Exposition is like a fairy tale world that has fallen from the sky into the heart of Paris. I am forever getting lost in the Exposition grounds, as this section of the city has been completely changed by the hundreds of buildings and new landscaping. The first night I went to the Exposition I saw the Rockettes from Radio City, dancing their "Swing It Kids" review in the Grand Palais. It made me nostalgic to see them and hear our American music in Paris.

The most imposing buildings in the entire Exposition belong to Soviet Russia and Germany. They have been built facing each other, which seems to puzzle everyone. These buildings gave me an almost human impression of male and female giants. The Russian Pavilion is like an enormous, earthy, peasant woman who has carried all of her material possessions to the Fair. Both the Germans and the Russians make a point of stressing their industries, and all the new mechanical things they have invented. The Germans are not obvious with their Nationalist

Socialist propaganda. They have been clever in using subdued lights and perfect "taste" to impress everyone with the power of the new Germany, while the Russians make no effort to understate anything.

I looked at the "proletarian paintings" in the Russian Pavilion very carefully. This is the first time I have seen any paintings from the Soviet Union, and they were a great disappointment. I could see nothing "revolutionary" in this contemporary Russian painting. All the canvases reminded me of the overcrowded military paintings which were produced like mushrooms in France during Napoleon's time . . . except that the people in these Soviet pictures were laughing, and their faces looked like vitamin ads. Nevertheless, I felt a spirit, in the Russian Pavilion, of a people forging ahead in much the same manner of our early American frontiersmen. I felt that they were not afraid of anything; that they were discovering they had one of the richest countries in the world and that they, the Russian people, held the fate of their material resources in their own hands.

In the Pavilions belonging to the smaller nations of Europe, one does not feel this energy. One feels an over-refinement of culture . . . that the people are lost in this present time through their past achievements.

The French have built two new museums which will be permanent structures at the end of the Trocadero Gardens on the Avenue de Tokio. Now these galleries are filled with the most complete exposition of French Art ever assembled in Paris. The paintings, sculptures, and tapestries begin in the seventeenth century and continue to the present time.

I have seen for the first time paintings I never dreamed existed. And pictures that I have looked at for years in reproductions are not at all what I imagined them to be in color. It almost seemed that I was looking at them for the first time when I saw the originals. For instance, I always imagined the angels in the background of the *Madonna and Child* of Fouquet were little Negroes, and had wondered why Fouquet had surrounded his porcelain-like Madonna with black angels. They are not

black at all. They are red and blue. In reproductions the portraits of Corneille de Leon appear large and seem painted with the freeness of Goya. In the originals they are about the size of my outstretched hand, and the brush strokes are fastidious and painstaking.

I saw also for the first time many canvases of the Le Main brothers. There is no comparison between the three: Louis, Mathieu, and Antoine. Louis is the great master. He paints with mood, and you sense he loves his peasant women and children.

There is the most exquisite Watteau painted on a wooden door as an advertisement for a picture dealer of that time. Seeing this beautifully painted door made me think very much about this thing called a "people's art." Subject matter is not important in a people's art, as the Russians believe (and the Mexicans). The important thing is to have good paintings where the people can see them in their everyday lives. I am certain that any man passing by that door during the time of Watteau must have felt that the painting on the door belonged to him, because it was not hanging in a place where he had to make a special effort to see it. Not that there shouldn't be museums and private collections; but there ought to be more good art in public places for the people to see and live with.

Outside this museum, near the roof, are some beautifully chiseled inscriptions. I wish I could give you a perfect translation:

"It depends on him who passes if I am a tomb or a treasure and if I am silent."

"Each man creates without knowing as he breathes, but an artist feels himself creative. His actions engage all of himself, and out of the pain of creation, comes an added strength."

Paris this summer is overwhelming for an artist. All of one's strength could disappear from the excitement of the hundreds of beautiful canvases hung throughout the city. I find myself completely drunk at the end of every day I spend in Paris. I

should never try to absorb so many pictures at once, but I'm afraid I will never have the opportunity to see them again. They are like people. I feel as though I have actually spoken to Watteau, Manet, David, and dozens of other great artists. They are more alive than one's everyday friends this summer in Paris.

Speaking of friends—my Florida "cracker" took my advice seriously about fulfilling dreams. He went to New York without a penny. Failing to sell his tunes on Broadway, he was determined to stay and found a job in one of the soft drink stands. The next day he came to see me, dressed like a pineapple, with the name of the fruit drink printed on the front and back of his costume! He was carrying his guitar, undaunted by his first failure as a Broadway composer.

I have heard from the nurse that my little girl is well and happy. I have her first shoes with me, and when I look at them at night, my loneliness is almost more than I can bear.

Samois, France, July 27, 1937

It is one of those freak cold summer days. The room where I am painting is so uncomfortable that I have come out here into the garden to keep warm. I was painting a canvas of a little boy dressed in a blue smock and holding a pink rose in his hand. His bare knees became bluer than his smock, so I have sent him home.

The first days I lived in this village I was very lonely. One can't just run out and drag models into the house. I spent a great deal of time trying to make friends with the children I saw in the streets, but I could never induce them to come into my house.

I met a woman in a bakery shop last week, Madame Bacciocchi, who speaks Spanish, and who has two little boys. Now she has been coming every morning to clean for me, and as these children tag along, I have succeeded in getting them to pose. They are quite wild and forever touching everything in the house. They will never sit quietly together, and so I have been

painting small pictures of one and then the other, not spending a great deal of time on any one. I have found that I work much better painting fast and direct. The moment I start to draw carefully on the canvas the children are tired of posing before I ever begin to mix my colors; so I have forced myself to draw while I paint.

There is a wash-house halfway down the hill, where the village women do their washing. I have tried to make drawings of them while they work, but they don't like this at all. Every day I make it a point to spend some time watching the washwomen. There is one in particular I want to paint: her name is Madame Fountaine. This woman is tall, with green eyes and straight black hair twisted tightly on the nape of her neck. Her arms are strong and beautiful, and her hands are like a medieval saint's, the long fingers rounded at the tips. . . .

Madame Fountaine has a frightful temper. One can hear her coming down the hill early in the morning, shrieking, and bullying passers-by. And in the evening it is the same when she slowly walks back up the hill, her twisted white wash in a great basket on the top of her head.

This wash-house is built like an ancient Roman bath. There is a tiled red roof over the top of the pool. The women kneel on slanting boards beside the green water, slapping their clothes with large wooden paddles and rubbing quantities of pink soap into them which they never seem to rinse out.

Samois, France, August 10, 1937

I miss my child terribly. I can't explain what this separation has done to me. I only know I am forever following children when I see them walking alone in the village.

Every afternoon, when the light goes, I take a long walk through the forest in the back of the village, with the two little boys of Madame Bacciocchi, Antoine and Charles. They know every path through the forest. If I went alone I would never come out. These French forests are like walking through a fun-

house of mirrors, where one bumps constantly into one's own face. Every path seems to be the same path you were walking on before, and as there are dozens of them winding in and out of the tall trees, there is no way of telling where you are. But somehow these children always find their way out along the Seine.

In the evenings this river is like a crowded thoroughfare. Barges are tied to the trees all along the banks. I have never lived by a river in France before. There is a complete world on it, especially the Seine, as it flows through the country. In Paris one does not realize this, as the long, flat-topped barges rarely pass through the city in great numbers. I never knew that entire families spent their lives on these barges . . . just as though they were on a small plot of ground. These barge people look happy and healthy. They plant vegetables and flowers in boxes on the decks, and even raise chickens, pigs, and goats.

This evening I watched one family. The mother was dressed in gray; her face was the color of the dirty boards of the deck. She had lined her children up in a row, washing their faces from a pan of soapy water. When she had finished with their faces she rubbed handfuls of suds into the hair of each child, until the children looked as though they were all wearing powdered wigs.

While I was watching the children in their soapy wigs, it started to rain. Great flat drops fell into the river. There was not a sound from the rain, and the river was like a mirror, making the reflections of the barges go straight up and down, until a strange yellow light came through the clouds. And then suddenly it started to pour, and I could not see the barges at all. I could only smell the wet hay, and the animals.

There is an Italian woman in this village who wears her long hair hanging down her back. I have never seen it pinned up. The whites of her eyes are filled with tiny red veins, and some days her eyes look swollen, as though she had been crying all night. She lives in one large room near the rue National, which is the street that runs along the back of the village in the direc-



Samois, France, August 20, 1937

The summer seemed to disappear when I flew north to Holland the other day. What a contrast that country is to France! The people are deathly serious.

I saw Rembrandt's house. The windows in his studio, built close to the ceiling, were small, and the room was so narrow. An American artist would have grumbled over painting in such a place; but these little windows, high in the wall, are the reason for Rembrandt's "light."

One can drive across Holland in a few hours. It's a curious sensation to skip across a country like that. In one city, Haarlem, I saw a large exhibition of Franz Hals' paintings. They were especially fine. I liked them better than anything I have ever seen of Hals'. They were not clever and dashing, as are the canvases of this painter in the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

In Haarlem, too, I saw my first white-washed Catholic Cathedral. What an experience to see an ornate Catholic Cathedral stripped bare and painted white. I felt the severity of the Reformation as I looked at the white walls of the Cathedral of Haarlem.

Rembrandt and Van Gogh have a special quality in Holland, because one sees in the faces of the Dutch the people those artists painted. I'm glad I did not go to the big Van Gogh show in Paris before my Holland trip, as one understands people better if one sees them in their own country.

The friend I went to visit in Holland, Baroness Ocky Van Boetzaler, came back to Paris with me. We went to the Van Gogh exhibition together. How beautifully the pictures are hung! Every gallery has an especially painted wall complementing the colors in the paintings. In the center of one room there is the palette of Van Gogh in a glass case, resting on a piece of yellow velvet. The last colors he squeezed from his tubes of paint, like knotty colored bubbles, are still on the palette, and so are the fierce, passionate brush strokes of paint.

Van Gogh's letters to his brother Theo were also enclosed in glass cases. Ocky read the fine writing, which is small and even. It looks quiet, and just the opposite from his painting. It is hard to believe the same hand could paint and write so completely differently. It is only in knowing what the words spell that one realizes the suffering in that handwriting.

In the Exposition there is also the medical chart of Van Gogh's illness. On one page it suddenly stopped. Van Gogh was dead. I looked at the photograph of Dr. Gatchet, who cared for Van Gogh. He must have been a very kind and wise man. There was a look about his eyes of the calm acceptance of the genius that sometimes tortures and is lost in people.

Samois, France, August 30, 1937

The weather has turned cold, and I have burnt the last of the wood. The few pieces left out in the garden are too wet to be used. It doesn't matter, because I will be leaving this village in a few days.

The other afternoon I took all of my paintings into Paris to the framer. I have completed ten canvases. They look well in the frames. The frame maker would not believe me when I told him I was an American. The French don't like American painting; they say we have no color sense or imagination—that we are even colder than the English, so far as painting goes.

I took Antoine and Charles in to the city. It was their first trip. You should have seen their eyes—as big as owls! They were thrilled with the Louvre because I told them it used to be a palace. The children and I sat for a long time in the Courbet room, resting on the benches there. Looking at the mural-like paintings of Courbet, I remembered the story Jean Oberle, the French painter, told me about Madame Courbet. After her husband's death she took a pair of scissors and cut many of his large canvases into sections, making numerous pictures out of one painting, often to the detriment of the original composition. She must have been a very mean woman. I can't imagine anyone

sacrificing the art of someone they love for the sake of money.

Before we left the Louvre I took one last look at Watteau's large canvas of his clown, *Giles*, standing so straight, with his round hat and the line of his coat accentuating the circular forms in the background. Watteau's "lightness" becomes a powerful example of bold painting in this canvas.

Before taking the bus back to the country I drove over to see the painter, Jean Lucrat. He spoke to me at great length about an organization similar to the Artists' Congress, called the *Maison de la Culture*. This organization has more or less the same aims as the Congress, but it has done everything on a broader scale, combining painters, writers, dancers, musicians, architects, scientists, motion picture directors, and actors into one organized group. They have a building where exhibitions are held, lectures given, and movements fostered to combat growing reactionary forces in France.

Among the members is Jean Renoir, the son of the great painter Renoir. He is a moving picture director, and at the moment is working on a historical film called *La Marseillaise*. The funds for this picture have been contributed by the workers of Paris. Another member of the *Maison de la Culture* is Romain Rolland, who is one of the directors of an interesting magazine published by this organization.

I have been working alone so much all summer; aside from the children in the country, I have seen few people. Lucrat made me feel very sad the other day, but he did open my eyes when he showed me a photograph of a slender, delicate, laughing girl about my age. He told me she had been crushed to death under a German tank a few weeks ago, during the defense of Madrid. She was a photographer, and had gone to Republican Spain to photograph the war. This brought home to me how close I have been to a frightful tragedy that is being enacted just overnight from Paris. It made me think of what Harold Lehman had said about sitting by a raging fire.

Before we left Paris and the children and I were sailing along the Seine, I took one last look at the Exposition grounds. The:

sky was just turning into twilight, and the bridges were illuminated with hundreds of colored lights, making the reflections in the river look like the sparkling water of the sea when the sun is setting. I kept thinking of Lucrat's photo of that lovely laughing girl, and all of the magnificence of the Exposition left a dismal impression on me. I almost wished I hadn't gone back to look at those fairy-tale dream pavilions of all the nations, after my visit with Lucrat.

### On Board S.S. *Georgic*

Before I left Samoa I made several drawings of the washer-woman, Madame Fountaine. She finally let me come to her house, which consisted of two small rooms. In the corner of one there was a stairway leading to an upper story, but it had fallen down, and the stones were lying all over the floor. I saw her husband, too. He was wearing deep red corduroy trousers and he was lying drunk in his wooden shoes, snoring.

Madame Fountaine sat at a table which was covered with dirty dishes, and she kept looking into the wall, smiling, as though nothing in all the world could bother her. Seeing these people walking in the sunlight of the village, one never imagines what their actual lives are. I never expected to find such sordidness. I didn't look for it—it was just there in front of my eyes.

My Dutch friend helped me to pack up my things. On the way to Le Havre it was raining, and then the full moon suddenly shone through the dark night, revealing the grain stacked in the fields. When we came to the harbor I could see the masts of the fishing boats and the large black stacks of the liners anchored there. Ocky stayed with me until we sailed.

I have "my summer" in my cabin packed carefully in the wooden box the carpenter of Samoa made for me.



### *PART THREE*



## CHAPTER XXIII

Beekman Street Hospital, New York, March 18, 1938

My dearest little girl:

Today I can see the first spring sunlight shining on the roofs of the buildings outside this hospital. I miss you terribly and I hope that I will return home soon. You are only two and a half years old, and because you are all that I have in this world, I would like to write to you just as though you were a grown-up young lady.

The greatest tragedy for us both was the sudden death of my mother. If she were in this world now, you would possess the most beautiful and compassionate grandmother. She would have shown you how to adore all that is on this earth, and she would have taught you that love and faith and simple everyday kindness towards those we pass each day fortifies one's soul against sorrow and frustration.

When I went away from home at sixteen to study to be a painter, I wrote to my mother all that I could absorb and understand or not understand. Now, because you are my own, my very own daughter, I want to commence this journal to you.

In beginning it, I cannot help but recall an afternoon in Mexico City, years ago, when I lived with an old Spanish family in their house in the village of Tlalpam. One afternoon the painter, Julio Castellanos, came to see me, and brought as a gift a book, *L'École des Femmes*, written by the French author, André Gide. In writing to you, I feel in a certain sense a bit like "Eveline" in the second part of her diary. I, too, want to put "my thoughts in order, to help me see clear in my own mind, like Corneille's Emilie, to consider: 'Et ce que je hasarde et ce que poursuis.'"

When Gide's Eveline writes that people "must have had some experience in order to understand that we can only hope to attain in life the things we pursue by risking what may be very dear to us" . . . and when she says that she is pursuing her deliverance, that she risks the esteem of her two children, and



that she wishes them to find an explanation and a justification in what she does, because they will no doubt be taught to judge her with severity—to condemn her . . . I feel these identical thoughts for you, my dearest little girl.

There are so many things that I would like to tell you now, to explain why we are alone. I am convinced that I can never love anyone again in this world except you and my work. I have suffered much in these years since you were born, and I have deliberately tried to focus my thoughts upon the events that are occurring in this world of ours.

I would like you to begin reading this journal on your sixteenth birthday. Perhaps by then this turbulent world will have settled down to quiet order; and if by chance you should become an artist, you will paint and draw with a feeling of security that should be the logical heritage for your generation.

This morning while waiting for Dr. Terry I started to read a book. It is the life story of one of the great poets of this world. His name is Heinrich Heine, and he was born in Germany during a time of great political strife and confusion. He lived a life of suffering, never able to keep to a positive direction, so far as the political life of his country was concerned. He became a wanderer and an exile, but he could never close his eyes to the complex events that were disrupting his life. I will quote part of a letter written by Heine in 1832:

“Here in Paris I am living through so many great experiences that I know I am watching history in the making. I may even become a historian . . . The whirlpool in which I have been swimming is too strong to free myself for the production of poetry.”

Now if Heine were living today he could easily write those identical words, because in Germany there has been a violent rebirth of persecution; the clock might easily be turned back more than a hundred years. Yesterday Germany, under the spell of Adolf Hitler, invaded Austria and took away their country from the people.

Because I am writing this for you, I want to tell you a bit more about this man Hitler. When I first heard his name and saw his pictures in the newspapers, I paid little attention to him. He looked so comical, and because there was never any dignity in what he said, I thought he was just another crackpot of the Old World.

Like most Americans of my generation, I grew up in the confusion of the world after four terrible years of war. I have no memory of ever feeling secure. For ten years after the end of the war we had a boom and then, in 1929, a depression—which was also felt throughout the world. Luckily for us, Roosevelt was elected President in 1932, when I cast my first vote. He seemed to grasp the gravity of the situation and instilled in me a hope for a new America. Perhaps if I had lived in Germany during those dreadful years of economic unrest after their defeat, I might have been taken in by the false hopes and promises held out by Hitler.

As it is, despite all that our President has tried to do to combat the depression, evil forces are at work throughout the world, which makes me fear that another war is almost inevitable. In spite of my great love for my work and interest in it, the walls of my studio cannot shut out a knowledge of things that are happening.

In Spain yesterday the city of Barcelona was bombed for the first time by a man named Franco. In China the people are being bombed by the people of Japan. And in Russia they have been having a series of trials, condemning a number of people to death.

Last summer, in France, I tried to be selfishly apart from the world. I lived in a beautiful little house overlooking the Seine. All day long I painted the children of Samois, and in the evenings I would sit by the river watching the river-barge people. Occasionally I went in to Paris, and there in the city I felt the tension of a divided France.

In life one passes through so many experiences that leave deep impressions and live on unconsciously in the imagination. Often

the entire course of one's life may be changed by a few incidental events, and through these incidental happenings we are given an insight into ourselves, our *real* selves. And sometimes one finds that he must turn a sharp corner, or he will be lost forever.

Perhaps if I explain it differently, you will understand. In Paris, one day last summer, I was sitting in a café in the Exposition grounds beside the German building, directly in front of the Russian Pavilion. And these two towering structures seemed to scream a mighty challenge to each other across the flag-draped avenue separating them.

Beyond the Russian building several "countries" further on, there was Spain—an insignificant, unfinished building. I left the café and walked towards the Spanish Pavilion. Inside, the walls were lined with unpainted boards which had a few drawings tacked carelessly over them. It was miserably pathetic. But when I came to the head of the main stairway I saw a large painting by Picasso. Below the canvas were letters spelling out the word *Guernica*.

It was a great, terrifying canvas exposing the horrors of the total destruction of the city of Guernica, the capital of the devoutly Catholic Basque people. The city was an undefended target for the German planes of General Franco. The abstract plastic forms of Picasso's painting reveal the gruesome tragedy more forcefully than any subjective technique: the burning house with its screaming victim, arms outstretched towards the sky; the great strides of a running female, her head caught into lines that unconsciously make your eye move up in the canvas towards a light that is sending out its rays over the terrified figures. But it is the head of a screaming horse, wild with fright, as though it had been gutted in the bull ring, and the dying, dazed head of the bull, that make you realize this canvas is Spain, tortured and exhausted . . . but filled with a defiant challenge.

When I returned to my table at the café and looked out across the Fair grounds upon all the nations of this world, I

knew that the world of today was as flimsy and unsteady as those constructions along the Seine, and that the only bitter reality was to be found in the unfinished Spanish Pavilion. Not so many years ago, in Mexico, I had watched the birth of that Spanish Republic. It was something that had aroused within me all that I had taken for granted as an American, and it was the one event that I understood after the World War. And because I could not forget these things I left France, spoiling my vacation, realizing for the first time in my life that I deliberately wanted to "walk into a fire." I'll write you more of this later. . . .

Today the air was so full of spring that it seemed medicine enough to make anyone well again. But when Dr. Terry came he took one look at me and said, "Just as I thought. You have jaundice!" You would never know your mother. I am as yellow as a Japanese. Even the whites of my eyes have turned that color. I feel just miserable enough to be cranky; that is all.

Mr. Crowninshield, whom I love dearly and who has helped me as an artist so much, came to see me this afternoon. I was surprised and happy that he had come. We talked about painting, but he could not hide his depression about his brother's illness. He sat on the edge of the bed, fingering his silk tie. Suddenly he said, "The trouble today is that beauty is disappearing from the world. You see this tie? I bought it ten years ago for two dollars. Today I have searched all over the city and I can't find anything to compare with the quality of this silk. It simply isn't being manufactured. And the silk that does exist will have an inferior substitute a few years from now. It is this way with everything in the world today . . ."

Edward Lanham, the writer, came to the hospital to see me later in the afternoon. He brought me a jar of candy and some pink and blue hair-ribbons. He was depressed, too, but not about his tie. Edward said that he hated blood—it made him sick—and what was happening in Russia at the Burkin-Rykoff trials was blood and farce mixed together. I don't agree with Edward. I think the condemned men are guilty of treason.

Rockwell Kent stopped in for a moment, and I was thinking

how handsome and fit he looked. Even though I don't care for his paintings, he is a superb black and white artist, and I think that he is responsible for revolutionizing illustration in this country. He is a curious mixture of romantic dreamer and practical craftsman. In a way I am glad he made me so disciplined when I was a young student. He loves America more than any other artist I have ever known. I like the way he's always getting himself out on a limb to defend what he believes.

Françoise Darcy came before my evening tray. She is returning to France in a few days with Jacques and the baby. I thought she looked very beautiful in her green suit and bright tomato sweater. She was happy to be leaving America, and when I asked her if she did not feel just a little shaky in returning to France, she said no, definitely. She said she only hoped Franco would hurry up and finish off the Loyalists in Spain, then France could feel secure against the danger of Communism overrunning the Mediterranean!

I have been putting myself to sleep with the *Journal of Delacroix*. Delacroix's journey to Africa certainly influenced his entire life, and the painters after him were to reap a rich heritage of color through what he absorbed from the Moors. He wrote that the five months he spent in Italy gave him fire for the rest of his days. It seems that all creative people find themselves through some intense experience.

New York, March 20, 1938

Today is Sunday. I have had a bad night. Mr. de Gersdorff came to see me before lunch. He is still steeped in the case his law firm is handling against the German government over a certain incident. It all has to do with collecting a huge sum from the World War. I think he is an optimist if he expects to collect anything from Hitler. Nevertheless, he is confident he will win the case, because he learned from his father, who was a homeopath doctor in Boston, how to cure a disease by injecting some

of the same poison of the patient's disease back into his blood stream. He laughed when he explained this to me, insinuating that he had something up his sleeve that would force Hitler to pay the debt!

Mr. de Gersdorff brought me a letter from the Baroness Van Boetzelaer in Holland, addressed to his office. Ocky wants us to visit her this summer. How you would love Holland. I remember that when I was a little girl I kept a scrapbook made up of pictures of foreign lands . . . and last summer when I went to Holland for the first time, it seemed as though I had been there before. All that I saw there was just as I had visualized it through the postcards in my scrapbook.

On the way to Ocky's home in Utrecht we passed Monnikendam. This lake was filled with fairy-like sailing boats, and even though it was summer, I could imagine the fast-moving figures of the skaters in wintertime, dressed in their "Turkish pants." At Spakenburg, the harbor was crowded with ghost-like fishing ships, their sails black. If the little girls of Spakenburg had not been so gayly dressed with flowered *epoletes* over their shoulders, and the boys with striped shirts, bright trousers, and fiery orange wooden shoes, I would have felt that I had come into a port of "deathly mourning" because of those black sails in the harbor.

In Volendam the girls were wearing white pointed caps which made them look like tulips; when I drove over to the Hague, we passed the Mint Tower in Amsterdam. This tower was actually singing! Ocky told me that Amsterdam had six singing towers; they sing every quarter of an hour. Their music comes automatically from small carillons.

When you are older I hope that you will love the Dutch painters. They had a genius for expressing the mysterious and unseen through their love of nature. The Dutch found a new form of portraying the Scriptures in simple, everyday, earthy subjects. There is a great truthfulness in their painting.

When I saw Rembrandt's masterpiece, *The Night Watch*, I

wanted to kneel on the floor in front of it. The light on the figures in this canvas is like the light that falls from a high rose window in a cathedral.

There was one Vermeer that especially impressed me, because it lacked the exquisite preciousness of most Vermeers. This painting is called *The Little Street*; the composition contains a portion of a red brick house, with two adjoining archways. On the left there is a small bending figure and below the shuttered windows there is a kneeling figure, and on the right a woman sewing in an open doorway. The paint is heavy on the canvas, the strokes bold. Somehow I believe Van Gogh must have learned a great deal about himself through Vermeer's *Little Street*.

The Dutch people fascinated me. They were so thrifty, forever scrubbing, dull in their personal dress, and sober in their speech. Their country is reflected in a dull gray light. One would never imagine that they would have the qualities in their nature to produce a great and rich art, nor that the period in which Holland's painters created their masterpieces should have paralleled that of Dutch freedom. In reality, the birth of Dutch freedom and the birth of Dutch painting emerged at the same time, out of the long and cruel oppression that existed in that country before the seventeenth century.

Staying with Ocky's parents at "Sandwyck," I certainly felt the "Reformation." Her parents are so strict. Ocky is not allowed to wear silk stockings, and she tactfully told me not to paint my mouth. Her father, the Baron Van Boetzelaer, looks just like the former Field Marshal von Hindenburg. Every morning at breakfast he would say grace, and after we had eaten *krente-broodjes* (black rolls with currants) buttered with "grass butter" and large slices of cheese, the Baron would open a great black Bible and read the Scriptures in a gruff monotone, like a monarch. Some mornings he would go on and on, and I wondered what would have happened to me if my own father had forced me to listen at breakfast-time to such readings. I don't think I would have developed any patience—or piety.

The Baron and Baroness have been all over the world, as they support a number of Foreign Missions. Last summer, Ocky's father asked me many questions about America. He thinks America is full of gangsters, kidnappers, and divorced, immoral people. He was very anti-French and whole-heartedly pro-German, which certainly spoiled my stay at Sandwyck, the most beautifully peaceful country house I have ever seen.

Ocky's mother is like a living Vermeer. She was very devoted to me, and when I left last summer she gave me a prayer book and her photograph. Perhaps you will play in the gardens of Sandwyck this coming summer.

New York, March 23, 1938

This jaundice is a very depressing illness. I don't feel really ill, just depressed, grouchy, and tired of looking into the mirror at my yellow face! Dr. Terry says I ought to be "white" in a few days.

This afternoon I was taken downstairs to the clinic to have my sinus treated. While I was waiting for the doctor I looked around the all-white room at the odd assortment of people waiting there, like animals, to be treated for their different ailments. They sat in rows. There was a little Chinese boy, his mouth open in front of an X-ray machine, all wonder. And a dirt-smearing man, clothes torn and patched, sitting scratching his head. His foot was wrapped in bloody bandages. In one corner there was a dope addict suffering from malaria. Dr. Falk, Terry's assistant, told me an interesting story about this man. In the last week this hospital treated forty drug cases, all suffering with malaria. The staff at Beekman were in a medical daze. They couldn't figure out why the forty dope fiends should have malaria. Finally they discovered that the forty cases received drugs from the same source, and that this addict had the fever, infecting the rest from injections with his needle. And so it was not such a medical mystery after all!

Dr. Falk told me about a Negro, an ambulance case of yester-



day. When his history was being taken, he said he was a mechanic by profession, then he reneged and said that he was really a crystal-gazer!

New York, March 26, 1938

I am waiting to come home. At last I am white! I spent the afternoon watching Dr. Terry in the clinic. He sat in front of a never-ending row of fat, diabetic Italian women. Dr. Terry explained the test tubes of urine to me. The green had no sugar; the yellow were filled with it. Each woman was like a child when her turn came. They could speak no English, but they knew what to expect from the color of the tubes. If their tube was a yellow one they would make faces and throw their arms into the air. I was surprised to learn that these women were taught how to inject the insulin into themselves. One woman had a blood pressure of 235. Dr. Terry told me calmly that she would die soon.

After he told me this, I watched her place her shabby hat on her head and I thought, "You are going to die soon, perhaps tomorrow." Sitting in the clinic of Beekman Street Hospital, I felt the uncertainty of life for us all.

New York, April 7, 1938

This first week home from the hospital has been full of disappointments. You, my darling, have developed whooping cough, and I have caught it from you. I feel so weak.

My exhibition at Carroll Carstairs' gallery has been called off, too. Mr. Carstairs has decided the paintings are too sad; he would like more alluring, charming faces on his walls. I am hurt, terribly so, because I have waited for this exhibition to take place. I have no right to criticize him; after all, it is his gallery, he must live. And I suppose he knows the sort of things he needs to sell to his patrons. These fourteen canvases were the best I have ever painted. Half of them were from Samoa.

The only thing I wish today is to meet the Spanish painter, Luis Quintanilla. Mr. Louie-Marie Eude, the art director of *Town and Country* came to dinner the other night. He said that he had met Quintanilla and that when I'm better we will all have dinner together.

New York, April 11, 1938

Today nearly 50,000,000 Germans of the Greater Reich, from the Baltic Sea to Brenner Pass, have voted 99.082 per cent for the seizure of Austria. This is a staggering fact; but what is more terrifying is what is going on about six blocks from where we live. On Eighty-fifth Street and Lexington Avenue the German-American League have their headquarters. Last night they celebrated Hitler's plebiscite with a mass rally—and an official report from Berlin was read by a representative from the German Consulate. School children, in Nazi uniforms, sang Nazi songs (and the Star Spangled Banner).

One speaker stated how important Hitler's victory is to the youth of the world. It is incredible that these ideas are being fed to some of the school children of New York.

I have finally met Quintanilla. He seems from another world. I would like to ask him so many things about the civil war in Spain, but his nerves are too on edge.

The other afternoon Nickolas Muray, the photographer, gave a cocktail party. I shouldn't have gone, but I'm glad that I did, for I met Condé Nast, whom I have never seen in all the years I have gone into *Vogue* to visit with Frank Crowninshield. The most beautiful woman at Nick's was Dorothy Hale. She was dressed like spring, with a flowered Daché hat.

Miguel Covarrubias, the painter, whom I met in Mexico years ago, is staying with Nick. Covarrubias is the most versatile of all the Mexican painters. He has tremendous vitality, and even though he turns from painting to writing to archeology, he never dissipates his energies.

New York, April 16, 1938

This evening I lost complete control of myself. I threw a bowl of salad at Mario Mazzillo. It happened towards the end of dinner. Mario had been popping the radio off and on for news from Spain. When it was announced that Franco had reached the sea at Vinaros, Mario shouted with joy. Being an Italian, he felt the armed power of his country backing Franco's victory. I knew, when he began to laugh with joy, that I was going to hit him. The salad bowl was the biggest thing within reach to throw. I am not sorry I did this. The reason Mario feels so sure of himself these days is because England has just signed a peace pact with Italy.

New York, April 17, 1938

Today has been a beautiful Easter. I was invited to a luncheon party at Mr. Nast's country house at Sands Point. It was a charming party. The guests looked happy, and no one wore any Easter finery to the country.

Walter Chrysler stayed long after everyone else had gone. He sat on the floor in front of the fire, joking and laughing in the manner of an everyday businessman, and not a great automobile magnate. He seemed so simple that I could not connect him with his skyscraper, his automobiles, or his love of painting.

Mr. Nast looks much more like the thing he actually is, the publisher of *Vogue*. He dresses with great care and his manners are extremely polished. I have never seen anyone who really likes to entertain people with such whole-hearted unselfishness.

He thinks I'm sitting on a cloud and ought to come down to earth. He becomes irritated when I talk about the Spanish Republic. He told me that if I ever met General Franco's ambassador, Juan Cardeñas, I would be so charmed by him that I would change sides immediately. I never knew Franco was so daring as to have an unofficial ambassador in our country when the United States officially recognizes the Republic—but it seems to be true. Mr. Cardeñas appears to be a great success in New

York society, as he has managed to influence Condé Nast—as well as his friends—into sympathy with Nationalist Spain.

Condé keeps repeating, "You don't know how mean human nature is; people are not as good as you believe." He means the working classes, who he thinks take advantage if they aren't held in line. I don't agree with him. Nevertheless, I admire the strength in Condé Nast's character. I never associated such strength with the publisher of a fashion magazine, and Condé is certainly a forceful character.

He told me that the reason he had succeeded in life was his ability never to "cut around corners." He said that when he was a boy cutting the grass in his father's front yard, he cut it better than his brother because he "squared the corners," didn't round them off like his brother. Mr. Nast is much more interested in what is happening politically in the United States. He seems far removed from the affairs of Europe. He has no sympathy with President Roosevelt who, he reasons, is running this country downhill with his government relief bills and what Mr. Nast calls "hit or miss" spending.

New York, April 24, 1938

The other night I met Mr. Bernard Baruch at Mr. Nast's. The conversation at the dinner was very lively. Mr. Raymond Moley was by far the most talkative. He certainly ripped into the President. He has a chip on his shoulder because of the economic conference in London in 1933, and because he was shoved out as Assistant Secretary of State. All of Mr. Nast's guests were happy with a statement that a Mr. Garrett, the director of General Motors, had made to the press saying that the American public ought to know how much "Big Business" has been responsible for the high standard of living of this country, and that Roosevelt was finally going to invite some big industrialist to the White House to tell his side of the story . . . Mr. Baruch ridiculed Roosevelt's "spending" program as a means of balancing the budget.

New York, April 26, 1938

Yesterday I bought your first spring bonnet. It is a pale yellow straw with little blue forget-me-nots around the crown, and there are blue ribbons to tie under your chin. You look so fresh and sweet. Oh Anne, I love you so! Noguchi and Liza Monk have been coming each day to sculpture your head in clay. Noguchi has just about finished, he works so fast, and I am delighted with what he has done.

I'm painting a portrait of Esme O'Brien, the most glamorous debutante in New York. Mr. Carstairs arranged this sitting for me. I'm working with enthusiasm. Esme is bewitchingly beautiful. She has slanting blue-green eyes and a large, full mouth. Her face radiates the winsome charm of the Irish.

The other night I went to Mr. Baruch's house for dinner. It seemed very gloomy when I entered the door. A silent butler took me to the second floor in an elevator to Mr. Baruch's study. This room was rather small. On one side of the fireplace there is a long table covered with photographs of President Wilson, General Pershing, the King and Queen of Belgium, and several pictures of Mr. Baruch as a handsome young boxer. Somehow, I felt as though time had slipped back and I was living in the period of Wilson. I wouldn't have been at all surprised if this former President had opened the door in place of Mr. Baruch. In the atmosphere of that study, I could feel all of Mr. Baruch's adoration for Wilson.

Dinner was served on a card table. I felt too self-conscious to enjoy the food, and before we had finished eating I realized that this clever man had been extracting my opinion on world issues—those that I could speak about. He was, to my surprise, concerned over Spain. He sympathized with the Spanish government's side in the civil war, but he said he didn't think they had a chance of winning because they weren't organized and had gone too far to the left for a Catholic country. He smiled and said he could organize that Republic in a few weeks.

I told Mr. Baruch I disagreed with him—that it was not or-

ganization the Spanish Republic needed, but arms, munitions, and planes, and that the embargo in our country should be lifted in order to give the Loyalists these materials. Mr. Baruch said the embargo would never be lifted on Spain, and even if it were, our country had no arms to sell. He looked very worried and annoyed, and kept repeating that America was one of the most miserably armed great powers in the world today. Then he started in on the President. He felt that F.D.R. was giving America away in his wild spending and said he was suspicious of the direction the President was leading the country. He felt that Roosevelt was driving at a fifty-fifty balance with the Russians. Mr. Baruch blamed Hitler on the Russians; he seemed also to feel that people receiving relief jobs in the United States were being cajoled unconsciously by Communist agents. And then he went back to Roosevelt's interfering in industry and labor. He said that he was against government control in such matters, except—in wartime; that there were too many crackpot social reformers in Washington. He added that he believed firmly in the capitalistic system; that it had given people the greatest individual freedom and security.

I told Mr. Baruch that my generation had come of age in a patchwork quilt of confusion; that the depression was the strongest reality people of my age ever had to face in "our world," and that such an economic dilemma had forced a demoralizing fear into the young people of America. Under Roosevelt, we felt that we were at least helping to rebuild our country. I tried to explain, too, what the W.P.A. had meant to artists. It had brought a feeling of security, because one's work at last had an audience in the people. I asked him if he didn't think a country as great as America should have a permanent art program, a Ministry of Fine Arts. Mr. Baruch shook his head, telling me that I was a dreamer, and then he added, "Anyway, that is a matter out of my field."

It is obvious that Mr. Baruch knows the world of today. He knows all the issues of the World War; because he is a financial genius, he knows what is needed in his own field to make the

wheels of the world turn again. But I am convinced that he feels an undercurrent of conflict. I think he senses being trapped just as keenly as the rest of us do.

New York, May 2, 1938

In the last week I have painted two more beautiful ladies: Mrs. Alexander Forbes, and Mrs. Carroll Carstairs. Now I'm going to begin a larger canvas of Esme for *Vogue*. Mr. Nast is trying his best to "pull paintings out of me" for his magazine. I blame only myself for my lack of interest. But I'm having a good time. Never have I moved in such a world of contradictions. I see people of all sizes, shapes, and "colors." This spring one could easily draw a line in points of view, they are so sharp. I never wanted to go abroad so much in all my life; I have succeeded in gaining consent from your father to take you to France for our summer vacation. You will visit him in the fall.

A few nights ago I was invited to a May Party at Mary Rinehart's. Noguchi, Dorothy Hale, and I tried to stay together, but it is just as well that we were separated at the dinner table, as I was seated to the right of brilliant, clear eyed William J. (Wild Bill) Donovan, who told me that he was going to visit Spain this summer. When I asked what Spain, he said Franco Spain, because when the summer ended that would be the only Spain. He asked me if I didn't know the war over there was a dead issue—that it had all been decided? When I asked who had decided it, he smiled and said it had been decided by the people who run wars. Then he told me that I was a baby—that the center of interest in Europe had moved to Czechoslovakia.

New York, May 29, 1938

My dearest little girl:

This beautiful spring month of May has come to an end. Brisk, exhilarating weather is something to remember, since we are now beginning to feel the sultry, sticky, hot humidity in the air—the signs of a long, hot summer.

I have been trying to work from early morning straight through the day until your afternoon nap is finished, and then I've been taking you into the Park for the remaining afternoon hours. Every day I wheel you over the same identical route to "our place." First we pass Harrison's Hardware store on the corner of 90th Street and Madison Avenue, and then I wheel you straight in the direction of the yellow-orange Notre-Dame-like towers that rise up from the rim of the reservoir.

Before crossing Fifth Avenue, we are usually stopped by the red lights, and there to the right of your carriage stands a large, palatial mansion of great dignity. Its adjoining garden is enclosed by a high black iron fence, with a stone curbing facing the Avenue. This curbing is our daily resting place on the way back home.

Often I have looked into the garden, thinking about the man who built this house: Andrew Carnegie. If all men who have the genius to accumulate great wealth could be endowed with the spirit of Andrew Carnegie, perhaps the capitalist world would have a better chance of survival. In his own words, Carnegie stated eloquently his creed concerning money:

"This, then, is held to be the duty of a man of wealth: to set an example of modest, unostentatious living, shunning display or extravagance; to provide moderately for the wants of those dependent upon him and, after doing so, to consider all surplus revenues which come to him simply as trust funds, which he is called upon to administer . . . the man of wealth thus becoming the mere trustee and agent for his poorer brethren."

It is hard to define why some men are filled with generosity and compassion. Often one born in poverty becomes a mean and selfish tyrant if he achieves great wealth, and will refuse to open his eyes to the unpleasant realities surrounding him. Andrew Carnegie started out in life as a bobbin boy in a cotton factory. Later on he worked as telegraph clerk and finally was employed by the Pennsylvania Railroad. Carnegie revolutionized the railroads. He invented the sleeping car. Because of this, his alert mind quickly realized the important new use steel would have



in the world of transportation, and he gradually became a steel magnate.

Of course, he made millions, and out of his millions grew a vast chain of charitable, educational, and cultural foundations. Andrew Carnegie might be a good example of defense for the whining industrial tycoons of today, but alas, they are too selfish; they lack his generosity of purpose. They resent what they are being asked to share in order to keep our great country on a new road of prosperity. They want to "bargain for America" and their fears of today are brought about by the underlying big fear of losing their own comfort.

The other day I had a fantastic experience. Through a friend, I helped to bring about the meeting of the W.P.A. administrator, Harry Hopkins (whom I had never met) and Mr. Baruch. One felt that they needed each other in the way they hit it off. I could hardly keep from laughing when I remembered how Mr. Baruch had called Mr. Hopkins a crackpot social worker. Mr. Baruch wants to come out from what he calls his dog-house; he would like to work with the President. I am certain this will happen now.

These May days, spent in the playground near the great circular field of green grass that lies directly behind Cleopatra's Needle, have been happy ones for me. Before my eyes I see you growing into a lovely, strong little girl.

Often the Spanish painter, Quintanilla, comes to sit there with us. He is very unhappy these days, because he wants to paint a fresco on a wall. When I talk to Quintanilla it seems as though I were back in Mexico in 1929, when all the Mexican painters were on fire, believing they were going to make a new Mexico overnight. This Spaniard feels that Spain will be a new and vibrant country if the Republic wins the war. He described his frescoes, which were destroyed by the bombardment of Madrid. When he speaks about fresco painting, I know that is the reason I'm fascinated by him. I'm still trying to pull back the memory of those first months in Mexico, when the greatest thrill of my life was painting on a wall. If Luis Quintanilla were just

an easel painter, he would not interest me nearly half so much.

The other day I tried to get a wall for him to paint on. When I think of what I did, I realize it was not only audacious, but really humorous. I called two Mexican painters I knew, asking them if they would work as assistants for Quintanilla. They agreed . . . asking me where the wall was. I told them to come to our apartment.

When I introduced the Mexicans to Quintanilla, he asked them all sorts of technical questions about fresco painting. Then they started to argue. The three could not agree on anything. Finally they stopped arguing and turned to me, asking where the wall was.

I took them in the subway to Columbia University and we trailed through every building. I told Quintanilla to pick whatever wall he liked best. He asked me if I were out of my mind, and insisted that we should try to see the head of the University before we looked at another wall. I told him that would be a waste of time, that he must first pick a wall he loved, and then describe to me what he would paint on that wall. After that I would talk to the president of Columbia. When Luis had found "his wall" we went home.

The following day I went back to Columbia with his scrapbook of reproductions. I tried with all my heart to convince the secretary of Dr. Butler that one of Columbia's vacant walls would be enriched with a fresco by Quintanilla.

I didn't succeed . . . but at least I tried.

Quintanilla was very depressed after this. He said that his ears hurt—he was certain they had been injured by the repercussion of the Madrid bombardment. I thought, if I couldn't find him a wall, I might at least help him get his ears fixed. I phoned Dr. Falk at Beekman Hospital and asked him if he would examine Quintanilla's ears. Dr. Falk said he would. Later he phoned to tell me they were perfectly all right, except . . . that he had taken out enough wax to shine his shoes!

I did succeed in doing one thing for this Spanish painter. Condé Nast gave him a party for me. It was a strange party.

Most of the guests were for Franco; Mr. Elliot Paul (a loyal friend of the Spanish Republic) stood in a corner, hiding behind his beard.

Later in the evening, after Condé's party, Luis took me to the Café La Casita to meet the journalist, Jay Allen. Allen's earnest and sincere love for the Spanish Republic moved me deeply.

I also met Ernest Hemingway through Quintanilla. This was just like a scene in one of his novels. Hemingway was walking back and forth in a narrow room, with a drink in one hand and a fishing rod in the other. There were several sick-looking young men who had fought in Spain sitting on the floor. They were drinking and talking about their lives—just like Hemingway characters. Which made we wonder if one became like a Hemingway character when one was around this writer, or if he just had a talent for picking as his friends characters that were like the people in his books.

On Board S.S. *Normandie*, June 29, 1938

My dearest little girl:

Both you and Margit are fast asleep. We sailed away today from a scorching New York and we have been at sea just about eleven hours. The ocean is beautifully calm. I feel as if I'm being rocked to sleep in a cradle as I'm writing to you.

Another month has passed, and if one could see a happy ending in all that has happened in these four weeks, they would have a new and more thrilling tale than any of the Arabian Nights.

A week end I will always remember was spent recently at the country home of Grace Moore and her husband, the former Spanish screen star, Valentin Parera. Mr. Nast invited me to go there with him. We arrived just at the end of a freak summer rain that had made the countryside damp and dreary. We found Miss Moore playing backgammon with a red bandana tied round her head; I thought she looked much more beautiful in

"real life" than I had ever seen her on the screen, where all of her natural, healthy charm is completely lost.

Towards the end of the day I took a short walk with her husband. He has a poetic love for the landscape of Connecticut, and when I spoke of his own country, I could see on his face an expression of tortuous confusion. He looked so completely Spanish in his American clothes that I felt sorry for him. He avoided answering me for a moment, speaking in a low voice about the love he felt for this land in Connecticut; then he said, "They were happy, the peasants of Spain; they were happy working the land that they did not own, because they were always secure with the 'Patron'," and he added, "I doubt if the Republic has given them this. For an American it is difficult to understand what being Spanish means; we do not need a Republic to exert our love for freedom, because a Spaniard is essentially an individualist."

I asked Mr. Parera if he agreed with a Doctor Alexander Hamilton Rice (the founder of the Institute of Geographical Exploration of Harvard University and one of the Directors of the Spanish Nationalist Relief Committee) who recently returned from a twenty-two day trip across Franco territory and who, upon his return to New York, stated to the press that the war in Spain could be linked to the great Crusades, because it was a war to save Christianity from atheism; that Franco really hated Fascism and Nazism and would create a democratic, socialist government for Spain after he had won the war. Mr. Parera was in agreement with the religious convictions of Mr. Rice, but he felt that he must have misunderstood the real intention of Franco which, he was certain, had in view the restoring once again of a monarchy, which he believes is the thing Spain needs, rather than a Republic, or a Dictatorship.

My own conclusions summed up these two men as being completely and thoroughly duped by Franco.

The following day, a number of people came to eat lunch, seated on long wooden benches in front of the tables standing in the field beside the guest house. One would not imagine that a

great opera singer would know anything about cooking, but Grace Moore is a genuine star of the culinary art. I liked the way she added a bit of salt and energetically ground fresh pepper into the steaming casseroles of delicious food before they were served to her guests.

Mr. Tullio Carminati, the Italian movie star, singled me out with his cold blue eyes. He was so frank in wanting to be clever in his praise of Italy's part in the war of Spain that I could not help feeling he was deliberately trying to "divide" people.

In the evening we drove over to the house of Lily Pons, who has recently married the conductor, André Kostelanetz. This tiny, elfin creature sat at the head of her dining table wearing the rosette of the French Legion of Honor. When I looked at it I thought of all that France represented to the world and especially to artists, and I hoped with all my heart that France would never change.

Mr. George Schlee, the husband of the designer, Valentina, sat next to me at dinner. When I started to eat he said, "You must be a painter." I asked him how he knew, and he told me that I held my knife and fork with "energy in my fingers." Later his wife, Valentina, who sat opposite, suddenly took a blue salad plate from the table and placed it at an angle on her head, creating a perfect hat. Oh, these Russians!

Before we left New York I took you into the Metropolitan Museum one hot afternoon to escape the heat. Quite by chance we wandered from the children's wing into the armor room, a great white hall with arches on the sides. Rows of colorful knights' banners hung above the arches, and there was a circular rose window in the rear of this hall.

You were terribly frightened at the armor-clad knight wearing a helmet with the horns of Valkyrie and holding a long lance, fearlessly sitting on a horse covered with a great red velvet "skirt." I was frightened, too, after looking carefully at the armored men standing around the room, when I realized that the Germans of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were more terrifying than the Italians in their armor. It seemed more

war-like, in comparison with the fine, engraved Italian armor, which had a beautiful elegance about it.

There was one German knight with an "iron face" that nearly made you cry, and I wondered about the soul of this race of men who had, in the fourteenth century, made such hideous inhuman faces of iron.

Today, when we came aboard the *Normandie*, she looked so beautiful and gay that it was hard to believe that we were included in the passenger list, like the rest—people setting out to vacation in a Europe that had kept the front pages of our American newspapers hot with conflicting headlines. It is because I have read so many of them that I want to sail across the ocean and see for myself what it all means.

## CHAPTER XXIV

Paris, July 4, 1938

Dearest little girl:

It is late, one o'clock in the morning. You are fast asleep; Margit is sitting in her eternal felt slippers, reading the newspapers and waiting for me to go to bed.

We have been in Paris just six hours. Jacques and Françoise Darcy met us at the boat train with the Baroness Van Boetzelaer, who had a tiny bouquet of roses for you. After I had tucked you in, we all went to have dinner in a small café near the Sorbonne. We had a delicious filet mignon with sauce, crisp fried potatoes, salad, and fresh strawberries with thick Chantilly cream. But I spoiled the dinner when I told everyone that I had heard that there might be a crisis in Europe before the summer ended. Françoise said that all such rumors were an American fabrication, to sell the newspapers in our country; even Ocky agreed that in Holland people felt peaceful and secure. Perhaps they are right. Paris is just as gay as ever, but the streets are pasted up with posters showing a new model tank, and urging the people to buy defense bonds. And one does not see the salute of the Popular Front any more.

Ocky has found us a comfortable house, near Fontainebleau at Samoreau, and she has, without my seeing it, persuaded me to lease it for six months. The Darcys are leaving for their country house near Biarritz in a few days.

Before undressing, Ocky went through my bag of silk stockings; she has wheedled half of them away from me already. Her mother will never permit her to wear such stockings in Holland, but in Paris Ocky turns loose! I can't understand why the Dutch want to look like something that will "never wear out."

Paris, July 9, 1938

You are the only one to lead a sensible life. Of course, everything you do is timed by the clock, while everything I have done

these last days has really been too much to crowd into a clock. It is wonderful to be back in Paris again. Paris makes one feel gay the moment one arrives, just as New York makes one feel filled with energy the moment one sets foot in that city.

I had wanted to see all the good exhibitions before we moved out to the country, but I have been spending most of my time trying to find several Spanish people to whom I have letters.

This afternoon I went to the Spanish Embassy to deliver a letter to Luis Buñuel, the Spanish surrealist and movie director. Ocky was with me. As I had not given her any forewarning, she tried to find out what on earth I wanted, while we waited in the small dark anteroom of the second secretary's (Señor Sanchez-Ventura) office. We sat in this dark room for over half an hour, until Ocky's impatience forced me to leave my card and the letter.

Later in the afternoon I went alone to see Jean Oberle in his new studio near the Chamber of Deputies. Jean told me he paid the equivalent of six American dollars a month for the three good-sized rooms on the top floor of an old rattletrap building. Jean showed me all of his latest pictures. I still like the small canvases much better than his larger pictures, painted in too much of a hurry.

After I had seen the paintings, Jean began to play on an old music box, while he kept pulling drawings from his portfolio. He found an old silk scarf among the drawings. Jean batted the scarf through the air with his cane and told me to read what was printed on it. The scarf was made during the French Revolution and it had a beautiful message from Roget de Lisle, the author of the *Marseillaise*, written across the faded red silk.

The nostalgic melody from Jean's music box and the scarf made me think of the Spanish Embassy, and then I asked Jean what he thought of the war in Spain. Jean was indifferent about the war in Spain and began to talk about France. He said that he was glad the half-raised arm and clenched fist of the Popular Front government of Blum had finally disappeared; that Blum's government had failed, and that France is settling down under



Daladier. He said that France would never completely recover until the Communists and Jews were thrown out!

As Jean is not well, I could not believe that he was convinced of what he told me . . . and because I was too tired from the heat, I didn't answer. But on the way down his long stairway I began to wonder if he really believed what he had said, or if it was just a mood.

When I came back to our hotel and found you playing on the terrace and Ocky politely talking with a strange, thin young man, with soft brown eyes and eyebrows that were arched in such a way that they made him look worried, I was surprised to find that it was Señor Sanchez Ventura from the Spanish Embassy; it was not until later this evening that I knew the reason he looked at me in such a peculiar manner when I entered the room.

Luis Buñuel came later to take us to dinner. He told Ocky and me that Señor Ventura had received my message by telephone, and that he had made a dash to the Hotel George V, expecting to find Paul Robeson, only to be completely let down when he saw that I was white instead of black! Evidently the clerk who gave my name through the telephone to Señor Ventura made Robinson sound like Robeson.

Ocky had never met a "Republican Spaniard" before today; what she feels about the war in Spain is completely colored by her Franco friends who have been interned by the Dutch government near Sandwyck in Utrecht. When Mr. Buñuel left us after dinner, Ocky told me she could feel no sympathy for anyone who sided with the "left." She said that the hour was approaching when Europe would have to choose between Communism and National Socialism; that France has become a weak, chaotic nation because of the "Communitic Jewish" leaders of the Third Republic. She claimed that the Jews have sapped the strength of France and ruined French culture through their new method of exploiting people under the guise of Communism, Socialism, or just plain Republicanism; that all of these methods of government were simply used to delude

the people into thinking they were gaining economic freedom and social justice, when in reality they were becoming victims of the Jews. She said that in America we could not judge National Socialism fairly because we did not have the menace of Russia on our back door step.

Ocky told me that the French were beginning a rearmament program, but really, it was a joke, because the French workers cared more about a forty-hour week than in making preparations to defend their country from aggression of any sort.

On the way back to the hotel, we sat for awhile in the Tuileries Gardens. Looking at Ocky's fine, sensitive face, it seemed impossible that we were both of the same age, living in worlds so far apart. For me, what is happening in the world is running far beyond government or parties. It is not just a political issue—the things that are happening that cause people to differ and hate each other. Today the issues are moral, and the consequences of them will reflect on the generations who follow us.

After today—I want more than ever to go to Spain, because I have come to the end of something within myself. I am tired of listening to stories about Russia . . . about Germany . . . about Jews. The struggle that is going on across the High Pyrenees, just overnight from Paris, is not merely talk. The talk is brought into focus by action. The reality of the fighting which is taking place is what matters. I am convinced of it, because the people there who believe in their freedom have been driven to make the final plunge, in defending it by force. I never imagined I could condone violence, but after today I begin to feel that there are times when people must accept the challenge to act with force. I begin to feel like a small piece of the earth that is being overrun by an enemy—maybe some day Ocky and Jean will feel this way, too. I know that Sanchez-Ventura and Buñuel would understand what I mean, because they have had no choice in evading what has happened to their country. They know what it means to talk one's self beyond moral and political compromises.

If I were a man, I would volunteer as a soldier and fight for the Spanish Republic; being a woman and an artist, I feel that what I should do is draw. If I can put down on paper what I see visually in Spain, in a few simple lines, this may be more important for the outside world than pages of printed words.

Paris, July 12, 1938

Today has been filled with so many people, so many experiences. This morning I drove out to a convent near Saint-Germain to deliver a note from Mr. Quintanilla (who is still in America) to his sister, a nun. I left Ocky waiting in the taxi.

Mr. Quintanilla's sister was a small, pale woman, dressed in the robes of a Carmelite nun. She asked me at once if I were a defender of the Virgin Mary, or if I were in sympathy with the devil—and her brother! When I laughed, answering that I did not like the devil, but that I stood for a Republic in Spain, she disappeared from the room, then returned with a volume of Santa Teresa. She hurriedly made the sign of the cross on my brow while opening the door to let me out into the street! I only tell you this because it was my first "Spanish family experience," and I realized the hate that must exist in the hearts of these people sharing the same blood!

After lunch, when you were napping, I left Ocky sitting in the sun on the terrace of Chez Francis. I crossed the Avenue George V. and went into the Spanish Embassy to see Mr. Buñuel, who had made an appointment for me with Señor Sanchez-Ventura, to discuss the decision I have made to go to Spain when "our" vacation is over, and you must leave me to spend three months with your father. I learned that Señor Ventura was formerly a professor of the History of Art in the University of Sargossa, and in spite of the enthusiasm he showed towards my making a book of drawings in Spain, he was more inclined to discourage my going. He told me (in confidence) that the government was planning to withdraw all foreign combatants in an

effort to convince the Non-Intervention Committee who their real interventionists were in the war. It seems there has been a lot of trouble because of Americans going into Spain, disregarding page five on our passports, which is stamped "Invalid for Spain." Even qualified journalists have difficulty in getting this ruling revoked by the State Department. And so our conversation ended without much success, although I was told I would be asked officially to come to Barcelona, and that if, after that, I managed to have page five changed, I would be given a visa. Señor Ventura told me about the American volunteers from the Abraham Lincoln Brigade who had been wounded and were stranded in Catalonia, and apparently were not able to return to America because of lack of funds and the diplomatic problems involved.

The people working inside the Spanish Embassy seemed of another world. Their faces were strained and thin. I could feel that each hour marked off an inflexible period of time for them. I should think the French, as well as the English, would hang their heads in shame over the fate of Spain.

At tea time, I went to see Mr. Baruch, who has just arrived in Paris. I told him that I wanted to go to Spain. I don't think he took me seriously, because I felt so weak I had to lie down on the sofa. I don't know whether it is the heat or the after effect of the jaundice and whooping cough that is sapping my strength. Whatever it is, I feel all in.

Before leaving, I spoke about the Americans who were wounded and not able to return to the States. And then I asked why, if he thought our Neutrality Act was such a stupid thing in prohibiting the sale of arms to the lawful Spanish government, it couldn't be revised to include an embargo on arms to Germany and Italy. There is certainly enough evidence that these countries are buying arms and reshipping them to Franco Spain. If the embargo was extended to Germany and Italy, this would force a moral judgment from the people of the Democracies on the Nazi-Fascist countries.

Mr. Baruch was not pleased to be reminded about the Span-

iards again, but he did show deep concern for the American Volunteers.

After tomorrow we are moving out to Samorcau. Madame Bacciocchi is coming from Samois to cook for us. She is bringing Antoine and Charles to run errands and pose for me. I will be glad to get you in the country.

Samoreau, France, July 16, 1938

I wish that you were old enough to ride a two-wheeler bicycle. This afternoon, Ocky and I had a wonderful ride over to the village of Moret. We hadn't intended to go that far, but the day was so beautiful and the road kept winding along the side of the river bank until we found ourselves pedaling through the narrow Gothic gateways over the bridge leading into Moret. You would have felt like a queen passing under those ancient gateways.

The Cathedral of Moret is the "happiest" church I have ever seen. Instead of the usual somber light of a cathedral, there is a glowing, bright yellow reflection from the walls. Some chemical in the stone has forced its way through to the surface. I am certain that no bishop ever thought of painting a church bright yellow!

We sat in the hard wooden chairs long enough to recover our breath and then we went into a small room off the left of the main chapel, and I bought a tin of hard honey-tasting candy for you from a nun dressed in a blue habit with a bird-like head-dress. There is a legend that the nuns of Moret have been making this candy for centuries. The recipe is a secret passed by word of mouth!

On the way home we stopped to rest beside the Seine in front of a beautiful Chateau that once belonged to Diane de Poitiers. Ocky climbed over the iron fence, and when she came back to the river bank she said that the ruin of France (in the past centuries) from the over-indulgence of her kings had at least left some good architecture, and that it was better than the ruin of France today by Leon Blum and the Popular Front! I was too

tired to wrangle with Ocky and tried to figure out a short cut through the forest of Fontainebleau back to our village. I don't think there is any place in the world that fills one with such peace as the forests of France. The light that falls through the foliage from the tall trees is the light that Rembrandt tried to paint into his pictures, only it is never the same.

When we stopped to rest again in the forest, I tried to tell Ocky once more why I wanted to go to Spain. She said that I was foolish, that I would only be in the way and eat the food that should be eaten by someone else. When I didn't answer, Ocky asked me what I was thinking about and I told her I had heard a new air raid siren on my way to Chantilly the other day; then I thought to myself—it is hard for anyone to know what to believe this summer. In America we have two World Fairs going on at the same time and in Paris there are hundreds of workmen preparing for the visit of the King and Queen of England. The Place Vendome is being covered with deep red velvet and all the boulevards are lined with flags and garlands of evergreen with paper flowers.

Mr. Baruch told me the other day, on our way out to Ambassador Bullitt's in Chantilly, that if the world escaped war this year, there would be a chance for a lasting peace for many years. He explains everything through the ideas of President Wilson (his great idol) and perhaps he is right in using Wilson's viewpoint about the Germans. Mr. Baruch says the Germans have just another clique of military leaders and if they can be forced back now, their power inside Germany will be broken by the German people themselves. But if they succeed in being a menace the rest of Europe, and America, will have to arm and remain armed and be prepared for the next step of their aggression.

He said that President Roosevelt was foolish in making a speech at the San Francisco Fair the other day about disarmament and that America should start a gigantic armament program right now!

But still, no one cares about the "actual war" in Spain, and what is an ordinary person supposed to think? Spain remains on

the margin in every discussion. At lunch the other day, Mr. Bullitt said that the Loyalists would have made peace with Franco earlier in the spring if the Russians had taken away their pressure from the Republican leaders. Mr. Bullitt is still very bitter because of his own experiences as Ambassador in the U.S.S.R. He has no illusions about "collective security" or the "freedom of the proletariat." He claimed that while he was in Moscow, people just disappeared and were never heard of again—that everyone lived in constant terror for their lives.

It seems unfortunate that as a former admirer of Russia, Mr. Bullitt has lost his faith in that country, and that through his own personal grievances he unconsciously influences people with whom he talks (especially the French) in their attitude towards Russia. If it is true that the democracies are unprepared to fight a war on any front, then why do they alienate themselves even in a diplomatic way from a country so powerfully armed as Russia?

Samoreau, July 20, 1938

I have been making some drawings for *Vogue*, illustrations for a story. Ocky has been posing in my pink negligée. I made quite a good one of her lying on the Empire sofa.

Mr. Quintanilla arrived in Paris on his way back to Barcelona. He came out for the week end with Buñuel. It was so rainy and cold; the house seemed buried under the tall trees surrounding it. At dinner the two Spaniards had a heated discussion about the war. Mr. Quintanilla, who is a socialist, accused the Communists (especially the French) of squandering the money belonging to the Republican government which was sent to Paris to publish the newspaper, *Ce Soir*. Mr. Buñuel, who is sympathetic to the Communists, argued against this until Ocky and I had to leave the table. She sat at the piano playing Bach, trying to drown out the profanity of the Spaniards. She told me no "monarchist" would ever speak in such a manner!

Finally the two came into the drawing room, and Mr. Quin-

tanilla settled down to sketch Ocky at the piano. I was glad when both Spaniards left for Paris the next morning!

Divonne Les Bains, August 29, 1938

We arrived in these beautiful mountains a fortnight ago to get away from the heat. Our hotel is a real "Idiot's Delight," as the vacationists of France are having a hard time relaxing this summer. Everyone is glued to the newspapers. No more visas are being issued for Italy. The Germans have commenced "war games," and Mr. Daladier ordered the forty-hour week abolished in order to speed up France's defense industries. In England yesterday, Sir John Simon definitely stated that England might not be able to stay out of war if a "local quarrel started in Central Europe."

Ocky is so upset. She is beginning to lose her peaceful feeling. She sent for her sister and brother-in-law, who are vacationing near here. When they arrived, I took you for a walk with Margit, in the direction of Mont Blanc. We came across a field covered with long tables. The peasants of the village were having a fete. Some were playing ninepins while others danced on a platform of boards laid across the grass. You and I sat in a flower-covered café eating strawberry tarts and watching the people dance. Margit was very sullen; she wants to return to America on the next boat. She is afraid to stay in France any longer (an astounding attitude for a Frenchwoman!).

Geneva, August 30, 1938

This evening we are taking the train back to Paris. I'm feeling better and you are in splendid health after the days we've spent in this wonderful mountain air.

Geneva reminds me of Mexico City. It has the same sparkling clearness in the atmosphere; but with all the surrounding majestic country, there is something about this city that makes it lack color. It is like a beautifully groomed woman who, in spite of



her beauty, has no character. I have been wondering why Geneva should appear this way. Is it because Switzerland is a neutral country? Is it because everyone who comes here is trying to reform and rearrange some world treaty?

You have seen the stiff, cream-colored buildings of the League of Nations. Their doors were locked tightly; everybody seems to be taking a vacation. When we were eating lunch alongside the placid lake of Geneva, I remarked to Ocky how deserted this city is. I think right now it is the quietest place in all Europe. The statues of Farel, Calvin, Beza, and Knox, near the Promenades des Bastions, were practically the only "people" we have seen today!

We spent the entire afternoon in the movies watching the horse-faced Fernandel. He made you and the rest of the audience laugh; but I am uneasy, because of Ocky, now. She is always wanting to dash off to Holland. I forget that it is not much further from Paris by plane than the train ride down to Washington from New York.

I have been invited by Mr. Baruch to hunt for a week in Scotland, but I can't decide from here just what I will do. Every day the news has some alarming incident, and yet most of the people I have met don't take the news seriously. They really have no "hard feelings" against anyone.

#### AUTHOR'S NOTE

"I have recently learned that during the invasion of Holland the entire Van Boetzaler family were among the first of the Dutch people to assist in a resistance against the Germans. They risked their lives assisting Allied airmen. One of the Van Boetzalers was shot at Buechenwald; his wife escaped this fate. She was liberated by our armies."

## CHAPTER XXV

London, September 2, 1938

When I finally decided to come over to London from Paris yesterday, it was with the assurance from Mr. Bullitt's secretary that there was no need to worry about war suddenly breaking out. Ocky has calmed down enough to stay on in Samoreau until you sail for America with Margit on the *Queen Mary*.

Here in London, the newspapers either scream out the headlines in a tabloid or the news is carried like an obituary notice in the *Times*! I was on the verge of returning to France again tonight after reading that France was sending conscripts to the Maginot Line; but our Ambassador, Mr. Kennedy, whom I met on the *Normandie*, came to see me with such a debonair manner that I have decided, after all, to spend a few days in Scotland—until I hear about my visa to Spain.

Mr. Kennedy said that nothing was going to happen in Prague because Mr. Chamberlain was such a capable man, and in the last few days the Germans had even let up on their criticism of the English in their newspapers because they felt the "British attitude towards the Czechoslovak problem is being considered fairly from the German point of view." Mr. Kennedy said that it was utterly ridiculous to have a crisis in Europe over a minority question.

Scotland, September 4, 1938

I arrived here (for breakfast) yesterday morning. Besides Lady Keyes, I will be the only other woman, as Mrs. X is leaving. She thinks this place is too uncomfortable. The house does look dreary and the country is the most dramatic and sinister I have yet seen in Scotland. There are no "gentle moors." High, rugged mountains rise straight up from the earth. From the age, shape, and form of the hunters, I think they show real courage in attempting to shoot in such country! We are an odd assortment. Mr. Baruch looks like a Wagnerian giant in his gray hunt-

ing cape. Sir Roger Keyes, a small, thin man with a receding chin and humorous, laughing lines in the corners of his eyes dresses in odds and ends. Lady Keyes has a bony, beautiful face, with chin whiskers. Her clothes are definitely prewar. Lord Castlerosse simply "ripples" when he walks. Colonel Follett looks like Ronald Colman; the Belgian Ambassador is very gray and worried. And then there are several "tweedy" bankers.

This afternoon it rained so hard everyone stayed huddled around the fire. Mr. Baruch reads the papers like an expert jigsaw puzzler. Nothing seems to surprise him. He knows that everything that is decided in France and England is decided out of fear because the two countries are hopelessly unarmed. Even though he goads his English friends into rearming, he never fails to emphasize how much they owe us for the last war! Mr. Baruch works in fits on his biography, which already has reached the size of a voluminous manuscript. He likes to read passages from it out loud. While he reads he peeks over the rim of his glasses to see what effect his writing has on his listeners.

I read in the *Daily Mail* a pathetically moving letter to the editor from the great Spanish writer, Salvador de Madariaga, in which he urges the end of the war in his country through meditation. Madariaga says that neither side can win and to prolong the war is not only a crime but a folly. It must have been painful for him to write such a letter. I felt, through the words, that he is a man who loves his country with such passion that he cannot bear the thought of choosing to hold fast to "one side" and lose the "other."

Scotland, September 6, 1938

This afternoon I shared the shooting box of Lord Castlerosse. It was a hard climb on foot to the rim of the moor. I wanted to laugh, while climbing, at this Laurel-Hardy lord dressed in enormous white and brown checks and sitting astride a tiny pony. I doubted if either the pony or Castlerosse would ever reach the top of the moor . . . and before they did the rain

started again. Inside the shooting box, we covered ourselves with heather, trying to keep dry while waiting for the grouse. Castlerosse spoke about Spain. He hated all Spaniards because they had poured hot oil on the English sailors during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Now he wanted to see them exterminated by the civil war! He had no preference or pity for one side or the other. When I reminded him that during the reign of Elizabeth hot oil was a common weapon of war used also by the English on the Spaniards, Castlerosse still held on to his Iberian phobia; but he was a little more one-sided in wanting the Republic to lose the war. He told me I ought to meet his boss, Lord Beaverbrook—that he could change my mind in a jiffy about Spain and Franco. When I asked him how Beaverbrook could change my mind, he said that changing people's minds was Beaverbrook's genius; that it didn't matter who was right, one always ended up by agreeing with him.

Perhaps it is the melancholy gray light of this Scottish day that has made me so introspective. I watched the grouse falling heavily into the heather and the children beaters with their white flags crossing over the moors. It all seemed such a waste of human energy, especially when one's mind is not on this kind of shooting.

After dinner I asked Sir Roger what he thought as a seafaring man about the English ships that are constantly being sunk off the coast of Spain. Sir Roger said the answer to that was easy—because these ships were not British, but were owned by foreigners who simply "used" the British flag in their illegal blockade running.

When I was alone with Lady Keyes, she told me about her husband's great naval victory in the World War, and as though her mind had unconsciously slipped back to the present, she added, "But now we are not prepared for war and I am afraid it may come." I asked her if she was not worried over the Germans controlling Spain, if Franco should win a final victory in the next months. Lady Keyes was very sure that England would benefit by such a victory. She was not afraid of the Germans in

Spain, but was afraid of the Republic because it was "red" and destroyed "classes." She said, "One has to stand by one's class," adding that Franco's representative in London, the Duke of Alba, was such a friend of the British, and Prince Juan was considered practically English.

Scotland, September 9, 1938

This evening, for an after-dinner savory, we all listened to Hitler's speech from the Zeppelin field of Nuremberg. The reception was full of static. This radio or wireless, as the English call it, is very dilapidated; even so, these English guests of Mr. Baruch were uneasy when Hitler said he wouldn't capitulate to anyone on the Sudeten problem. Soon after the broadcast, Mr. Baruch spoke to the President long distance. He acted as excited as a small boy before the connection came through, and as sad as a fallen patriarch when he had finished talking.

Scotland, September 10, 1938

This morning I drove into the village to buy some tweed. On my way home I read in the *Times* that the British are sending out notices to mobilize all the officers in the Navy, Army, and Air Force.

During the afternoon drive I shot with Colonel Follett. It turned so cold that even the grouse had sense enough not to leave the heather. We shivered through most of the afternoon without reloading our guns. Colonel Follett had a small bottle of "spirits." Perhaps it was the whiskey that made him confess that, as an Englishman and an officer, he hadn't the slightest idea of what was going on in Europe. As far as the war in Spain went, he didn't know what on earth it was all about. When I talked to him about Mexico, that country seemed as distant as the moon to him!

Tonight there was another talk by Hitler, asking for a plebiscite of the Sudeten Germans. Everyone except Mr. Baruch seemed to feel that this is the way out of the difficult crisis in

Czechoslovakia. Mr. Baruch told them that such a plebiscite was impossible with a man like Hitler, especially when he demanded that all Czech police leave the Sudeten area during the voting, which would naturally leave the Germans in complete control.

Even though these English people are not admirers of Mr. Chamberlain, nor are they in sympathy with the "Cliveden set," they have been affected by the rumors circulated in England by Lindbergh. He claims, after looking over Russia's airfleet, that he found it in a chaotic condition, without leadership. As these people are suspicious and unsteady in their opinions about the Soviet Union, these observations of Lindbergh are sufficient for them to put the Russians in the ash can! And they are willing to make all sorts of concessions in order to keep war away from their Island—which they realize at present would prove an easy mark for a determined conqueror. Frankly, I feel that they, like the same classes in America, fear the Russians, who are not threatening them, more than they do the Germans, who are.

London, September 12, 1938

This morning I drove out to Kent, to Chartwell Manor, to see Mr. Churchill. When I arrived I felt nervous—there were so many things I wanted to ask him and I thought I was a bit audacious to take up his time with my questions—though he has plenty of it now. He is on the "outs" with practically everybody in England.

I waited in the drawing room, holding a folder of reproductions of my paintings, although painting was the last thing I wanted to talk about today. The drawing room was a comfortable, not luxurious room. The sofas were covered with flowery chintz and Mr. Churchill's paintings hung on the walls. There were landscapes, figure studies, and still lifes, all painted with brilliantly clear colors in the French Impressionist manner. They were not "literal," as most English paintings are, but full of imagination and boldness.

When he came into the room he was wearing an old battered

hat, with a long goose quill shooting straight up into the air. I could not help looking at the hat before I saw the smiling, prankish face beneath its brim. Mr. Churchill said, "I hear that you are a painter, but . . . tell me the truth—you aren't a newspaper woman? They ask so many things and they make quite a good deal of money from what I say, but now it wouldn't matter if you were a writer, because no one would pay a tuppence to read what I think today and that is why I have gone back to being a bricklayer. I seem to be good enough at this to be a member of their Union!"

When he finished talking he asked me if I would like to watch him finish his morning's work. He took me first into a small room off the hallway which was filled with hats from the ceiling to the floor. He gave me a pair of rubber boots, and while I put them on he changed the goose quill felt for a seaman's cap. We crossed the lawn in the direction of a group of small red brick houses. I watched Mr. Churchill fit together a layer of bricks, working on a portion of a wall. When he had finished this, we went over to his studio.

The paintings were hung like his hats from the ceiling to the floor. He said that he painted for pleasure, to calm down his nerves from the strain of politics. But I could tell, from the way he watched me look at his pictures, that painting was a serious pastime for him.

When I mentioned that I was on my way to Barcelona, Mr. Churchill turned quickly and said that I was very foolish to risk being bombed in Barcelona—that I should wait in London and be bombed there. It would be much more historical. He added in a severe tone, "Don't you know the world is working itself up to a real war?" He said that as a young American I should take the first boat home and urge the people of my country not to be spectators of events that were happening in Europe, or there wouldn't be a chance to re-establish sane, civilized conditions in the world!

When I asked him what he felt about a Republican defeat in Spain, he defended the Spanish people's right to their legally

elected government . . . but he was not certain a Spaniard could ever be an honest-to-goodness Republican. He felt that their characters were too erratic, lacking the individual determination to co-operate in a system of self-government. He said that Spanish individualism always led to anarchy and not to Republicanism. Mr. Churchill was still inclined to favor the monarchy and he showed a genuine fondness for the former King Alfonso. He claimed that if Spain was not stabilized by a monarchy, everyone would be "shooting their own grandmother."

The Spanish Republican, Premier Negrin, did not impress him at all; he suspected he was being flagged into position by the Communists. . . . Churchill looked at Spain through the eyes of an Englishman. Spain was something to be pressed like an old flower under the Rock of Gibraltar.

During lunch he talked a great deal about the Russians. He hated Communism as much as he hated National Socialism. He was firm in impressing on me, an American, the heritage I shared with the British from the tradition of centuries of Anglo-Saxon Parliamentary government, which he felt the most enlightened system for human beings.

After lunch we went upstairs into the low-ceilinged rooms under the roof where Mr. Churchill does his writing. There were a number of manuscripts lying on racks that resembled those used by musicians. He showed me a large parchment book filled with the writings of the Duke of Marlborough. Mr. Churchill was proud of this ancestor, but he was even prouder of his American mother.

When we went out into the garden again, he showed me a series of pools. There were three of them. The first started from a tiny stream and the water was full of sediment. A system (of his own invention) was used for filtering the water which, by the time it ran into the third pool, was crystal clear.

Churchill used the pools as an example to prove that Communism could never be successful because there was never an even level of anything in life. Some individuals had minds as clear as the filtered water in the third pool, while others, he said,



were as muddled and sluggish as the water in the first pool. He did not believe in the superiority of the "masses" at all, and to illustrate the inequality in human nature a bit more, he pointed to a spotted heifer grazing in the field near the garden. He said that this heifer had given birth to two calves, while her sister never had had a calf, let alone a good gallon of milk!

Before I left Chartwell Manor he said that I should not be taken in by the appeasement epidemic in England. He was mad that the English people were being duped into thinking they couldn't stand up to a lunatic. He said that if there were an immediate union of France, England, Russia, and America, the peace of the world could be defended and not thrown away through appeasement.

Before taking the plane tonight, I had one last look at London, walking along the Thames. Westminster Abbey was surrounded by scaffolding, and there were dozens of workmen cleaning the dirty black stones of the Abbey with milk. I hope England has enough cows (with milk) to see this job through to the end!

Paris, September 16, 1938

I'm glad that you've sailed away from this jittery continent and that I finally secured my visa for Spain and, what was more difficult, permission from our government to go there.

Ocky has locked up the house. We have been staying at the Hotel Champs-Élysées. Joe Kennedy, Jr. wants to go along to Barcelona. He asked me to have his name included on the permission sent to me from the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but when he phoned his father, the answer was a firm NO—as far as Spain was concerned!

I have bought materials to work with, besides paper and paints. My baggage consists of three skirts, a few sweaters, and woolen jackets. Mr. Bullitt's secretary, Offie, tried to discourage me from going, saying that if anything did develop in Europe, he thought Spain would be the first corner to clean out.

We ate an early dinner this evening in the Place Montmartre.

I have never stood on the steps in front of the Sacré Coeur without feeling I could fly away on the magic carpet from the Arabian Nights; this evening, when I thought of the English Prime Minister, Mr. Chamberlain—flying to see Adolf Hitler in Berchtesgaden—it seemed a pity he did not have a “magic carpet” instead of an airplane.

Everyone in Paris is waiting to see what will happen to this Englishman at Berchtesgaden. At first the news of his trip caused a flurry of unrest; now that the day is finished, people are confident only good things will happen. And as this has been their attitude all summer, I am not going to delay my trip to Barcelona just to see what happens to Mr. Chamberlain in Germany.

## CHAPTER XXVI

Barcelona, Spain, September 21, 1938

My dearest little girl:

I am sitting in a small narrow room with white walls. The large window at one end of the room has strips of tape pasted like a checkerboard over the glass. This is to keep the window from breaking from the vibrations of the antiaircraft guns . . . and from bombs.

There is no electric light. I am writing to you by candlelight. Oh, my darling, already I am missing you terribly, and I would be lying if I didn't tell you I'm terribly, terribly afraid.

You must be landing now in New York, while I'm writing this first page in your journal from Spain. . . . Towards dusk we arrived on the outskirts of Barcelona. The streets through which we passed along the waterfront were crowded with lorries driven at a fast speed. I could see, in the half light, the sunken freighters in the harbor; over the doorway of a bombed pier there was an Escudo of Alfonso XIII, untouched and looking nobly pathetic standing guard over the broken debris. By the time we arrived at this hotel (the Majestic) on the *Paseo de Gracia*, it was completely dark. I couldn't see the people; I could just hear their footsteps walking through the streets, and these footsteps seemed to absorb into the darkness of the city.

In the hotel, my passport was carefully examined by the manager, who looked at each page by the light of a candle. He spoke Spanish with the thick, fast accent of the Catalans, and I found it difficult to understand him. When he had finished with my passport, I had to wait some time before the *comarada* brought me to this room.

While I was waiting I picked up a newspaper called *La Vanguardia* and read that the people of Czechoslovakia are still resisting the demands of Germany. There were some quotations from a speech that Mussolini had made at Undine, saying a light was dawning on the horizon, that Italy would wait for the final curtain to fall before pronouncing herself, and that all foreigners

must learn to fear the new Fascist Italy. I tell you about these lines from the newspaper because reading them here in Spain tonight, their meaning has an entirely different color. Somehow, you don't worry; nor are you wondering anxiously any more about what is going to happen. You feel serene and calm, because you are in a place where people ARE fighting Fascism with all their might. In spite of the fear I have now, because I know that at any moment there is the possibility I might be killed, I am beginning to feel satisfied and happy because I had the courage to come into this war.

The woman who brought me up to my room became like a sister to me in a few terrifying moments, when I almost went to pieces from fright at the noise of the antiaircraft guns. The guns went off just as she was unlocking the door. I ran straight for the window. She drew me away from the glass with such composure, explaining that I should never go near a window during a raid, that I managed, with a certain amount of shame, to pull myself together. I wish that I could explain to you exactly what I felt when I heard the antiaircraft guns tonight. I thought for a moment that I was looking into my own head, and that it was black with yellow lines, moving and twisting at such a speed that I could not co-ordinate a single thought. And because I could not think, I felt as though my head had become separated from my body! I suppose that it is good this happened so suddenly tonight. Now I have an idea of what an actual raid must be like.

I would like to tell you about some of the people I saw in the dining room (there was one item on the menu: lentil beans, engraved in gold) but I am too tired, and I want to tell you about the drive into this country from France.

I waited several days in the Grand Hotel in Perpignan for Mr. Quintanilla to arrive with a car in order to drive me straight through to Barcelona. One could feel the war, just sitting in the lobby of the Grand Hotel. People kept coming and going all day long. They would check large parcels in and out from the desk—which I took for granted was food.

Perpignan once belonged to Spain. There are several ancient historical buildings there, one in particular that you would love, with its battlements and cupola. This building was constructed by Sancho, the second king of Majorca, in 1319. I began to feel Spain so vividly in Perpignan that the suspense of crossing the border lost its edge.

Luis Quintanilla arrived in Perpignan early this morning in an old battered Chevrolet. The driver, a tall Spaniard, was dressed in a very tattered suit, with the cuffs and collar frayed at the edges, and as he had several days' growth of whiskers on his face, he looked wild and mean. We stopped first on the outskirts of the city to change my dollars into pesetas and to buy food. Two wooden boxes were filled with Italian salami, sardines, English cookies, etc.—all things that we, in America, would have selected for a picnic. It seemed a strange selection of provisions for a war! But I didn't say a word—not even when Luis bought three potato omelettes and some wine to eat and drink on the way.

Before we reached the Spanish frontier we were stopped at least a dozen times and our boxes ripped open and searched. This was French nonintervention hard at work and the soldiers were mad when they didn't find anything more than a sausage!

The border separating France from Spain looked like an American railway crossing. Our papers were first examined by the French in their mustaches and blue uniforms, and then they were passed over to the Republican guards with faces too young to be men. They were dressed in khaki-colored woolens, the pants tied around their ankles, and on their caps there was the Republican insigne.

When our papers had been thoroughly looked at, we were permitted to start on the long grade leading up into the Pyrenees. The Republicans watched us until we had turned the bend in the road, holding their fists in the salute of the Republic.

It was a beautiful afternoon to be driving into a war! The air was filled with the odor of eucalyptus and pepper trees. There

was not a sign of life anywhere in the mountains, and because of the stillness and the similarity of the vegetation to California, it seemed that I was going home and not into a war.

About fifty kilometers from the frontier we stopped on a straight stretch of road, parked the car, and walked over to a clearing on the edge of a deep ravine. The driver took off his cap and civilian coat, and I saw the insignie of the Republican *Carabineros* on his shirtsleeve. While we were eating the omelettes, a stray yellow dog came from out of nowhere. He was dying of hunger, and when I held out a piece of my omelette for him, the *Carabinero* snatched it from the dog, telling me there was not enough food left in all Spain to feed an animal! He looked across the ravine and told me the front was just the same, or "they would be over there."

I was really very scared sitting in the mountains. I had no idea where we were or how far it was to the front. The frightful stillness only added to my fear because I expected at any moment a plane would cross the sky. Both Luis and the *Carabinero* could see my fear and they were very mean in their joking and teasing.

The first village we came to was Figueros. We stopped again to fill the radiator with water. The buildings were half destroyed. A hospital had the walls and ceiling blown out, but there were still twisted bits of steel strewn over the floors and I could tell they had once been beds. The streets were deserted except for a few old men who sat in the shuttered doorways sunning themselves.

At Gerona there was more life—women were washing in the river, and wounded hobbled through the narrow streets. We stopped again for gasoline and I had a chance to look at the Cathedral, which was boarded up, except for a section that was built underground and used for an air raid shelter. The steps in front of the Cathedral were overgrown with grass, and tiny green plants were growing out from the sides of the church. It looked like something that had been dug up out of the earth.

A young militiaman sat on the steps holding his gun across his

legs. He wanted to show it to me, explaining it was very "practical" because it could fire twenty-five times without being re-loaded!

The fields on the far side of the Ona river were being plowed by women. Their animals were so thin that I wondered how they could walk the length of a furrow.

Barcelona, September 22, 1938

Early this morning I was awakened by the *comarada* with a white towel tied round her head, a broom in one hand, and my breakfast (a demitasse of a blackish liquid supposed to be coffee and a hard piece of black bread) in the other hand. She cleaned my room while I ate, staring at me in such a hungry manner that I felt guilty for eating.

When I went down into the lobby, I found Luis dressed in a pair of white linen trousers and a grey flannel jacket. He looked as though he were starting out for a round of golf and something had happened to spoil his game. He was talking very fast to a young man with blond hair whose face looked haggard and ill. Luis introduced me to this man, the correspondent of the British *Daily Mail*.

They were discussing a speech which the Spanish Premier, Dr. Juan Negrin, had made at Geneva yesterday, asking the League of Nations to set up and supervise an International Committee to withdraw Foreign Volunteers (from both sides) in Spain.

The British correspondent said that such a plan was sheer folly if the Republic expected to stand up against the offensive that Franco was going to launch any day against the Republican forces on the Ebro.

Luis Quintanilla is a great admirer of Dr. Negrin. He has known him for many years, and he speaks about the strategy of Negrin as though he were the chief of staff and not a painter. When I asked nervously how far the Ebro was, Luis became irritated and went on talking with the correspondent.

I sat in one of the wicker chairs in the lobby, waiting for them to finish. The window in the front of the Majestic lobby was covered halfway up with curtains. I looked out into the street over the curtains, and wondered again how far away the Ebro was . . . and then I picked up the morning paper and read that the British Prime Minister, Mr. Chamberlain, had left England again. He was flying to Godesberg, Germany, to talk with Hitler.

I felt very nervous when I read this. I knew that whatever was happening in Godesberg was going to tip the balance in this Spanish war . . . to one side or the other.

Finally Luis came to fetch me (with the *Daily Mail* man) and I stepped outside the doorway of the Majestic into this city of Barcelona.

The Paseo de Gracia, which runs in front of the hotel, is a wide, tree-lined avenue. This morning the street was filled with people walking to work. Everyone, it seemed, was reading the news of Chamberlain's air voyage to Godesberg. These people looked tired and worn, even though the day was just beginning. I could tell from the way their clothes hung in folds about their bodies that they had lost much weight.

The women were hatless and barelegged. Most of them wore rope-soled sandals. Luis took me first to the Rambla de los Flores, which is a street lined with flower vendors. Even though the flowers were fresh and fragrant, I could not see the flowers. I looked at the ragged women vendors twisting pieces of green stems around their bouquets. I wondered how they could still smile and arrange their flowers after two years of war.

Then we walked to a street where I saw an entire block of bombed houses. Here sections of the street were ripped open and jagged craters made it look as if an earthquake and a volcano had struck this block at the same time.

Luis held his two hands like a box in front of his eyes. He told me that if I looked at the gutted ruins carefully in this manner, I would be able to find beautiful abstract designs among them. I could see no beautiful abstract designs in this horrible rubble. I could only imagine the faces of the people who had



lost their lives in an avalanche of tumbling buildings and bursting bombs.

The correspondent sat down on the curbing and stared grimly at the ruined buildings. He had covered the story of this bombardment when it happened a few weeks before, but he said no bombardment was as wicked and horrible as the betrayal by the outside world of Republican Spain. He told me he could never forgive his own country for their part in this betrayal. I was surprised to hear him accuse the British of thinking up the non-intervention agreement and, he added, passing it on to the French for a final launching. He said the Russians were the only realists—that they supported the agreement during the first months of the war, until they realized Germany and Italy were using it as a smoke screen to cover up their participation on the Nationalist side.

I asked the correspondent if he thought the Republic was dominated by the Russians and told him what I had heard in England about the "Red Menace" on the Mediterranean. He said that this was the most worn-out question of the Civil War in Spain. He told me that he had lived in Spain since the very beginning of the rebellion, and that he had watched the Republic being "sold out" by the so-called democratic countries of Europe—all except Russia, who again was the only realist, because she knew how to add up the score. He said Russia was looking out for her own safety by selling the Republic arms—and he defended the Republic for taking whatever they could from the Russians.

Walking through some of the streets of Barcelona was like looking at a weird canvas painted by Salvador Dali; as Dali is a Catalan, I was convinced these people of Catalonia must all be "touched" with eccentric tastes. You would have laughed at one apartment house which was built like a mountain, with a road running round and round like a serpent until it reached the upper stories. And you would have loved the one constructed like a fairy castle, with a Moorish cupola, egg-shaped windows,

and flower basket balconies. I saw another strange one which was named La Pedrera (the stone quarry). It seemed to move in the wind: each floor was built like a wave!

The Cathedral of the Sagrada Familia (which, including the ancient Gothic cathedral, is the only church which has not been burned) is a holy nightmare. There are four spires in the shape of long, inflated balloons, covered with an all-over waffle-iron design. The entrance looks as if it had been made of stiffly beaten egg whites!

I also saw the bombed Barrio Chino (a sinister section of the city) and then I walked over the broken glass and rubbish of the market. Luis told me that the rebel planes bombed the market in broad daylight when it was crowded with women and children!

When we returned to the Majestic, I had my first real taste of the rations of this city. It is hard to describe what we ate today at noon. First we had a watery soup served in a cup which Luis called *Agua de Mediterranean* (Water of the Mediterranean); after that, a two-inch square of indescribable meat, a few lentils, and some strange greens (which tasted like grass).

I noticed a woman dressed in red, with bare legs and white sandals and a head of wild-looking hair, table-hopping with her arms full of food tins. I asked who she was, and without answering, the *Daily Mail* correspondent left our table and brought her back with him. He introduced me to this woman, who was the correspondent for the Russian newspaper, *Pravda*. He told her that I had just arrived from England and that I had quite a talk with Winston Churchill—about Spain. The *Pravda* woman threw her head back and laughed loudly, saying she didn't give one hoot about Churchill or England. I was relieved by her answer; I did not want to argue with this woman.

When she left us, I watched her table-hopping, handing out dabs of butter and sardines to Republicans. The correspondent smiled and said that she had the "edge on the news, both from the front and behind the front." I didn't doubt it . . . with her tins of food.

Barcelona, September 24, 1938

Yesterday afternoon Luis Quintanilla took me to the Ministry of Propaganda to meet the director, Constanca de la Mora, whose husband, Hidalgo de Cisneros, is minister of the air force. Before arriving at the Ministry I stopped to buy some white roses. This was the only thing I could think of that would show my admiration for Miss de la Mora's work without wasting time by talking. I was very impressed by the simple beauty of this Spanish woman. She is related to Antonio Maura, a great statesman who served under the monarchy. Her expression was one of such wholesome sincerity that I never doubted a word of the matters she discussed with me before the plans were made for my work in this city.

Before leaving her office, I noticed a photograph of a child with a wireless set; when I told Miss de la Mora that was the sort of subject I would like to draw, I learned that this was a photo of her daughter who had been sent to a children's camp in Russia. I don't think I could ever be as self-contained as this beautiful Spanish woman if, one day, I had to send you so far away because of war.

Miss de la Mora assigned me to a girl escort named Auroa, who was given instructions to take me to all the *refugios* (refuge houses) for women and children, as well as to the centers where women worked preparing clothing for the front.

The first *refugio* was run by the Communist Party. The name, *Rosa Luxemburg*, was painted on a board over the archway leading into the front garden. I was taken through this former mansion. It was spotlessly clean and well equipped to take care of the children, who were asked to sing and dance for me. Watching the children, my heart ached for you—and because you are so beautiful and healthy, the sight of these little Spaniards with their wan faces and thin bodies made my heart ache even more. As the afternoon wore on, I saw one building after another, ill-equipped and overcrowded with women and children. The impression of the *Rosa Luxemburg* completely disap-



PHOTOGRAPHS BY IONE ROBINSON

*Little Girl in the refugio at Barcelona*

*Republican Boy, Barcelona, 1938*





PHOTOGRAPHS BY IONE ROBINSON

*Republican Boy with French Soldier in concentration camp, Argelès*

*Republican children aboard refugee ship of S.E.R.E.*







*Young Republican*

PAINTINGS BY IONE ROBINSON: BARCELONA, 1938



*Young Republican*

peared; it seemed almost unreal compared to these filthy holes scattered near the hills back of the city.

Everywhere I went today I saw the picture of the Communist member of Parliament, Dolores Ibárruri, known as the *Pasionaria*. She is a very beautiful woman, with magnetism and power in her face.

No obstacles were put in my way to choose where I wanted to work. The building I chose is crowded with an assortment of women from all parts of Spain. It takes nearly an hour to walk there from the hotel, and as I have had nothing to eat all day long, I am very tired. The women and children have such starvation rations that I wouldn't dare take a cracker. Besides an allotment of beans, I saw the government food truck dump off some "Russian meat." It looked like a frozen piece of fat. I couldn't see any meat on it. The people cook whatever is given to them, wherever they like in the building, and so when you approach from the street, the building seems on fire. Smoke pours out from six storeys of windows!

There is an open elevator shaft which has been roped off. Even so, it makes me shudder when I remember the dozens of little children wandering up and down the floors all day long. The rules about circulating in the streets are strictly enforced, and the rooftop is covered with dirty washing, which only adds to the misery of everyone. One woman told me this afternoon that she has not had a piece of soap for over a year. But she was cheerful and philosophical about the sun, which she said "was almost as good as soap."

Most of the women are illiterate. The paper is read out loud by a young woman from Asturias named Laura. In spite of their illiteracy, these women have an astonishing knowledge of what is going on in the world. Chamberlain's air voyage with his long umbrella is being followed with child-like faith. They feel that whatever happens, they are bound to win this war . . . the thought of a defeat is simply not possible for these women. When I asked one room full of Andalusians what party they



belonged to, they answered, "We belong to the Party of Republic!"

Before the Fascist rebellion, they all had a chance to vote, send their children to government schools, and own a piece of land. The Republic is like a rainbow that has been caught on the tips of their fingers!

Barcelona, September 26, 1938

It was a rainy Sunday and today it is a "blue" Monday. But this is the kind of day that gives the women and children of this city a feeling of security. They know the rebel planes are not apt to fly in bad weather.

I drew only half the day; the rooms were too stuffy and filled with smoke. The women lay sprawled on the floor, scolding and loving their children. Most of the morning I stayed on the top floor in the room with the Asturians. These women from the different provinces are as clannish as though their rooms were actually a part of the map of Spain! The young woman who reads the newspapers aloud each day was ill with a bad cough. She lay in the corner of the room with her baby, whose head has been injured by a piece of shrapnel. Her father, an old man of about seventy (the only man in this *refugio*) kept moving about the room with a small wooden box that he uses for a chair. Everywhere he sat made the women angry; both Laura and her sister Clotilde treated him like a useless but necessary piece of baggage. I made a very good drawing of the old man.

Already I have been caught in the fever of waiting—marking off the hours for something almost supernatural to happen. From the window of the *refugio*, I can look into the courtyard of a convent across the street and see a young officer training his fresh recruits how to march. The women cheer these soldiers all day long . . . and they know that when they finish their training, they will go immediately to the front.

On my way home today, I had my hair washed, trying to "escape" a few hours from the atmosphere of siege that exists in

this city. As yet, I have not seen a single store window that is not empty and filled with dust. In the beauty parlor, instead of escaping, I saw the war from a different angle. My hair was washed without soap, dried in a filthy towel, twisted into curls with a perfumed mixture, two rusty curlers, and a few hairpins. When I went out into the street I could "smell myself" and I was glad it was raining.

This evening I was taken to a government-controlled export and import concern for dinner. It was located in another "mansion," guarded by steel-helmeted soldiers with fixed bayonets. My papers were examined several times before I was admitted to the cellar and placed in line with the employees. When I finally arrived at the serving counter, I was given a bowl of thick oily soup with a few garbanza beans and bread.

I sat at the table with the director and a distinguished-looking man who could have doubled for the former King—if his clothes had been less worn. I learned that he was an Admiral, and a former Monarchist who could have had "everything" if he had sided with Franco instead of with the Republic. There was another civilian from Madrid who spoke at great length about a formula he had for powdered milk.

During dinner, everyone talked about the Czechs. The newspaper was passed around and I took my turn reading Hitler's latest speech from the *Sports Palast*, saying that Czechoslovakia was "conceived as a lie and conducted as a swindle for twenty years." There was a large, smiling photograph of Roosevelt on the front page. I felt glad to see our President in Barcelona, even if he was on a piece of paper! No one paid much attention to the news. They were too tired from another day of actual war.

While I was reading the paper, I overheard some "gangster English." It came from a man who was a captain of an American ship named the *Wisconsin*, which had broken through the blockade in repeated trips to Odessa and back. He had just arrived in port and refused to unload his boat unless the director of the exporting and importing concern gave him double the fixed price agreed upon before he set sail. He talked like a real

pirate. He said he didn't give a hoot for the Republic or Franco—all that he wanted was his money or he would dump the cargo of wheat into the sea! He got the money.

After dinner the Admiral took me upstairs and showed me through the house of a "liquidated millionaire." In the drawing room that is now used as an office, the walls were covered with black lacquer, inlaid with mother-of-pearl monkeys, gold-fish, and tropical birds. When I asked the Admiral how he felt working in a murdered man's house, he told me calmly that more people of this sort should have been done away with in the beginning of the Republic and then perhaps there would have been no treachery or rebellion!

On the way back to the Majestic I asked the Admiral why he had become a Republican. He told me that Spain had been in an internal mess since the World War; that it was during the time of her neutrality at that period that the people began to think. A wave of liberal ideas spread over the country, revitalizing the people who wanted to have more of a share in the direction of their country. They were tired of the unstable cabinets and the economic and political oppression by the Church; although the monarchy was supposed to be a parliamentary affair, Alfonso kept the masses shackled until there was such unrest that he tried to find a solution in a Dictatorship, dissolving the Parliament without the consent of the people—which was pure treason. The Admiral claimed that all the telephones and fine highways of Primo de Rivera couldn't pull Spain together again. The people refused to be governed by terror, and when the Monarchy was overthrown it was largely through the efforts of liberal-minded Monarchists like himself who had decided that a Republic was the only form of government that could restore Spain to the people—giving them the opportunity to forge a future for their country.

Barcelona, September 28, 1938

It is only Wednesday; the week is just half-finished. I will never forget these days. They drag, and yet they go so fast. Living is more like a dream. I have never drawn so well in my life; perhaps it is the feeling that each drawing may be the last that makes me work so hard.

It is still raining and the *refugio* becomes filled with smoky rooms. I stopped drawing again today at two o'clock. The women are getting nervous and out of sorts. This morning while I was drawing, a girl of twelve from Madrid recited some poems by Garcia Lorca with such feeling that, if Lorca were still alive, I am sure he would have been deeply moved.

I was asked to read the newspaper out loud. The old man gave me his box, and I sat at the head of the stairs so that my voice would carry all the way down to the first floors. The people shouted for the news of Mr. Chamberlain. I read his speech to the British:

"How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and fitting gas masks because of a quarrel in a far away country. You know already that I have done all that one man can do to compose this quarrel. After my last trip to Germany, I realize how vividly Herr Hitler feels that he must champion every German whose grievances have not been met before this. He told me again privately, that after the Sudeten German question is settled, that is the end of Germany's territorial claims in Europe. At present I ask you to await as calmly as you can the events of the next few days. As long as war has not begun there is always hope that it may be prevented and you know I am going to work for peace to the last moment!"

When I had finished this, a woman from Andalusia yelled up from the third floor. "How far is Spain from London? Is our war too far for Mr. Chamberlain? Are there not Germans in Spain? Does the English Premier think that we will live forever on the food we eat each day?" A woman from Madrid shoved her way

towards the elevator shaft and shouted back at the one from Andalusia, "It is not the fault of the English we have no food, it is the fault of the swine of Catalonia. They are starving us to death." A short woman with her hair clipped like a boy's made a beeline for the woman from Madrid, screaming, "The whole of this war has fallen on the backs of the people of Catalonia; be thankful you have us to fall on!"

I was afraid there was going to be a real free-for-all, until the old man stood up and tried to calm the women. He told them to remember they were all Spaniards—and Republicans.

When I left these wretched people, I took a long walk up into the hills near the *Tibidabo*. Barcelona lay in the valley below, covered by a fine mist. Walking through the pine trees, I could see your little face and blond curls—and the world returned to a semblance of normalcy. At least everything in the forests above the city was the same as it had always been. The trees and the thought of you restored my faith in life. It is hard to look at hungry people all day long and keep that feeling.

Coming back to the hotel in the fading twilight, I saw that the people were walking with their heads bent down, staring at the faint gray type of the newspapers. Now I know, when I see them reading while they are in the streets, that something serious has happened.

I bought a paper from an old woman at the corner of the Gran Via Diagonal and the Paseo de Gracia. I sat down on a bench, holding the paper close to my eyes in order to see what the letters spelled out (the ink is so diluted that one can scarcely read the papers here). I read that Hitler has let up his pressure on the Czech people, and has asked for another conference with Chamberlain, Daladier, and Mussolini . . . at Munich.

I folded the paper and started once again in the direction of the hotel. Small groups of soldiers were gathering together along the Paseo. I saw that they were smiling, and I overheard one young captain say that he had read Mussolini was going to "pull out" of Spain—and that the war would soon be over.

When I reached the Majestic, the entrance was filled with

more soldiers, and they were singing with the *Pravda* woman. I thought, if she is so gay, certainly she must have reason to believe the Czechs are standing well and holding their own. I went on to my room, tired—but happy for the first time in Barcelona.

Barcelona, October 1, 1938

This morning, walking through the rain to work, I felt sick at heart for these people. There is a frightful stillness over this city, as though someone had died. The betrayal of Czechoslovakia has left everyone numb.

When I arrived at the *refugio* the women were standing about the empty, smoky rooms holding their arms close to their bodies, as though they had something in them. They were not thinking of Chamberlain—he has already been forgotten. They were thinking about their husbands and their sons; and they were thinking about Spain.

All morning I painted a canvas of a little boy. I didn't draw on purpose. I thought I might distract the women and children by using color. I had no place to put my canvas, so I held it by one hand, propped on my knee, while I mixed the colors, and tried to keep them clear and clean by constantly washing the same brush in the turpentine cup on my palette.

The mother of the little boy posing for me gave him a piece of bread to keep him still. He nibbled at one corner and then another, like the children always do when they eat their bread rations—trying to make them last as long as possible. Seeing these children hungry grips my heart. I know that if I saw you withering away before my eyes, I could not bear it.

As I painted this child I thought of Mr. Chamberlain. I wondered if it could be possible that he really believes he has done a great and lasting deed for the peoples of Europe. The newspapers said that the English people were jubilant and happy. If conferences can be held to destroy countries, what will happen here?

I don't see how the people of the city can go on, their misery

is so great. Even I am beginning to know what it is to be hungry. It is an experience that I will never forget. When you are hungry, the world is reduced to just a place one could eat in. You think of everything you have ever eaten and hope beyond hope that something will happen by nightfall to fill your empty stomach.

This morning the woman Laura from Asturias told me that she knew I was hungry. She said at first it is hard to be this way—it makes one mean and cranky—and then, after awhile, this feeling passes and you begin not to feel . . . at all.

When I finished my picture, I took Laura with me to the "fun house" on *Tibidado*. It was a long climb to the top of this mountain, which lies directly behind the *refugio*.

Before the sentry who guards the antiaircraft on *Tibidado* saw us, we had enough time to wander through the deserted "fun house" and look at the glass cases filled with mechanical toys. I put a coin into the case of a moth-eaten dog. It barely moved as he tried to jump through a hoop held by a laughing clown, its face covered with dust. The clown's hand would move feebly, and when it was halfway in the air, fall limply back into position without the mechanical strength to finish the gesture.

Laura had never seen such a toy in her faraway village in Asturias, and even though it hardly worked, she thought it was wonderful.

Dr. Negrin has returned to Barcelona from Geneva. This evening I listened to the description of the meeting of the Cortez in the Monastery of San Cucufa. The *Daily Mail* correspondent was almost smiling as he described the way the *Passionaria* heckled Negrin, to the point of provoking the Premier to insist upon a vote of confidence.

This woman has great power in Spain, but Negrin seems to be a man who will not easily be "pushed around." I read his speech to the Cortez a few minutes ago. When he said the Spanish struggle was "not merely a political issue but a cause which represents the future orientation of the world," and that:

"war is not avoided by sacrificing small states," I thought he went on record as being one of the great leaders in this cynical world of today. He is one of the few who has the courage to speak out against what has happened in Czechoslovakia.

Barcelona, October 2, 1938

This evening Luis Quintanilla invited me to have dinner with him and Julio Alveraze Del Vayo, the Foreign Minister (whom I heard speak in Mexico City when he was the first Ambassador from Republican Spain to Mexico).

Tonight Mr. Del Vayo looked like a broken man. As we sat at the round, marble-topped table in Luis's room, Del Vayo hardly touched his food. At first he could only talk about the hunger of the people of Barcelona, and the shock of what had happened yesterday was not concealed in anything he said.

Del Vayo's bitterness towards the French was even greater than what he felt about the English. He pressed his hand against his forehead and seemed on the point of tears, as he spoke with intense emotion about France. Del Vayo said that the French were never definite in their minds as to whether they were going to stand by their treaty or tell the Czechs to make their own terms. He felt the French had followed, hour by hour and day by day, the pressure of the British, whom he accused of never trying to bring together the powers that could have stopped Hitler, and that France, in her partnership with the British, has lost her greatness as a nation.

And then he left the table. Walking slowly across the room, he stood at the open window and looked down into the Paseo de Gracia, but closed his eyes again, as though he did not want to look into the darkened city. "Oh, what stupidity," he said. "What great stupidity. They had everything—literally everything—in their hands."

While Del Vayo still stood by the open window, the shrill, ether-like sound of an air alarm went off, and with it the lights.



The three of us were separated in the large room by the sudden, intense darkness.

These enemy planes had come so suddenly that there was not even the silent space of time that usually separates the alarm from the first antiaircraft fire. We could hear the explosions—one after the other. They were bombing the port. The darkness of the night suddenly turned into bright daylight from the searchlights that sent their giant beams shifting across the sky, and then there was a rapid explosion of red flares.

Del Vayo leaned from the window and looked into the sky. A few moments later he came over to where I was standing and took hold of my hands, telling me not to be afraid. I wondered, when he said this, if he were afraid. But why shouldn't he be? I was, of course. Everyone in this city is afraid when the planes come over. But there is nothing anyone can do except have faith that he will not be killed.

While we were standing in the darkness looking out into the blinding silver beams of the searchlights, I saw my first enemy planes. They were flying very high and looked like tiny flying fish caught in the crisscross beams of light. I thought of Chamberlain's words, "There will be no war in our lifetime," and they almost made me laugh.

When silence settled over the city, it was as though some horrible creature had retreated into the sea, leaving a trail of destruction and death behind. I thought of those whose job it would now be to find the dead, the wounded, and the near-dead . . .

Before he left, and after the lights had been turned on, Del Vayo looked at the drawings I had made in the *refugio*. I could tell from what he said about them that he knew about painting. This made me very happy, and also that he seemed to feel deeply about what I was trying to do. He said I ought to make some sketches of the women in the munition factories—that they were the most heroic of all the women behind the front, and the ones really holding back Franco by making the countless shells so desperately needed to fill the guns of the Republic!

Del Vayo told me he would arrange for me to work in some of these factories in the next few days—and that I should go to the front, to see with my own eyes the moral strength of the Republican Army. He added warmly that if I needed any help in carrying out my work, I was free to come to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and smiled as he said that he was the “most informal Foreign Minister in all Europe.”

Barcelona, October 3, 1938

Since the night before last, there have been continual raids over this city, and now they are being repeated throughout the day. No one has had any sleep, and as I am so far away from you on my twenty-eighth birthday, I feel a hundred years old.

I ate in the *refugio* in the middle of the day with the Asturians, who had managed somehow to find six potatoes. I didn't ask where they came from, as I knew by the way they bolted the door that no one else in the building had any.

Cooking on the contraption rigged up as a stove in the middle of the floor was a real ceremony. The Spanish people have such generosity and pride! If I had gone away without eating they would have been offended; yet, knowing their hunger, and in spite of my own, I felt like a criminal eating their food!

Because of the constant air attacks, people are beginning to feel that Franco will start the drive on the Ebro any time. But not today. Franco is celebrating in Burgos the two years of his “administration” in Insurgent Spain. The women in the *refugio* laughed when they heard he had appealed to the government to surrender, promising all Republicans who had not committed crimes that they had nothing to fear. The old man remarked on the foolishness of such a promise when, in the eyes of Franco, just to be a Republican meant committing a crime!

On my way home tonight I heard the newsboys crying out that Hitler had entered Sudetenland in triumph, over a road strewn with flowers and guarded by bayonets!

To celebrate my birthday, and to forget how I long for you,

I opened a bottle of French cognac and invited several newspapermen, a French captain, and André Malraux to share it with me. Everyone was laughing at the way Mussolini returned to Italy, "heralded as the prince of peace!" Malraux read out loud the words of Mussolini, "In Munich we worked for peace according to justice. Isn't this the ideal of the Italian people?" We all agreed that the Duce had a queer conception of justice! Malraux predicted that whatever official sympathy the Loyalists had had from the French was at an end and the only hope for the Republic to survive would have to come from the Russians, unless the Americans lifted the embargo.

We spent the rest of the evening talking about Chinese drawing. Malraux claimed the Chinese were great draftsmen because they drew as though they were writing. He is making a movie of this war. It seemed very impractical . . . and Malraux is so thin and nervous that he looks on the verge of being seriously ill.

Barcelona, October 5, 1938

I have moved from the Majestic to the Ritz Hotel, where there is supposed to be more to eat. But as I have added another mile to the distance I must walk to work, I will probably be just as hungry.

My room here is large. I have a real fireplace (but no wood) a bed with white canopy (but the sheets are as gray as the walls—they have not been washed with soap for ages).

Today I had an experience which might have landed me into serious trouble. A young girl whom I had met asked me to go with her to her mother's house to leave a small package of food. On the way she told me that her entire family had been living in this house since the beginning of the war, like prisoners. They never went into the street. She said that they were not for Franco, and they were not for the Republic either . . . that they would have no part in either side of this war.

It was evident, when we reached her family's house, that they had been wealthy people. The rooms were large and well fur-

nished, and they were built round an open court—like a Moorish house.

I stood on a tiled, glass-covered verandah waiting for my friend. I could feel doors being opened and closed, and I knew people were moving about in this silent building, but I never saw a soul until the girl returned and we went away, locking the front door as we left.

Barcelona, October 6, 1938

Late yesterday I ate lunch with the Admiral in one of the few public restaurants. All of the walls had been blown out and children were standing in the streets, staring at the people sitting at the tables. I could hardly eat a mouthful of whatever we had. I will never forget the way a frail little girl with long, dusty hair grabbed a piece of bread from my hand . . . it was done so fiercely, like a dog and not a child. The proprietor, a short, fat Catalan, with hair shooting out from his bald head like a Chinese doll, would run back and forth on the sidewalk, chasing these children away with a long stick. No sooner would he chase them away than they were back again—like a swarm of flies.

After lunch, when the Admiral and I were walking in the direction of the *refugio*, I saw two men running towards us. I could hardly believe my eyes when I recognized Pujol and "Bennie Pancho" Barrios, a fat Indian who always followed Siqueiros' entourage of "brother-painters," even though he can't draw a straight line.

Pujol was in tears as he threw his arms around my neck. The Admiral stood looking at the two Indians in amazement, while Pujol sobbed like a baby, "I knew it was you, because of the hat." My hat has caused me quite a lot of trouble in Barcelona. No Republican woman ever wears a hat; in Loyalist Spain a hat on a woman's head is regarded as a Fascist symbol. Nevertheless, yesterday my hat served a useful purpose. Through it I met these two old friends!

Neither of the Indians would leave me, so I took them to work

with me. The women in the *refugio* crowded around Pujol and Pancho. They could not understand how I had ever come to know the two Indians.

When I asked about David Siqueiros, Pujol told me he had been made a colonel, because he had been a major in the Mexican Revolution. But he added that Siqueiros had never been near the front! Pujol said that David had changed completely since he had been wearing a uniform. He had become a real "neat and clean" Don Juan, with never a hair out of place!

Barcelona, October 7, 1938

Today Pujol and Pancho invited me to the Mexican Embassy for lunch. We all waited in a small room adjoining the dining room for the Ambassador, Colonel Tejeda. Finally his private secretary came and told us all to sit down at the table in the dining room. In the center of the table there was a great bowl of fresh Mexican fruit. I stared at the golden ripe mangoes and green avocados until I thought I would have to sit on my hands to keep from grabbing one, like the little girl with the dusty hair who grabbed my piece of bread yesterday.

When Colonel Tejeda came into the room, the two Indians jumped from their chairs like children until he sat down at the head of the table. Tejeda has had a fantastically colorful career. During the Mexican Revolution he was one of the most feared leaders. I have heard countless stories about his ruthlessness and the manner in which he had men executed at the drop of a hat. When I remembered how the Mexicans once hated the Spaniards with an almost intoxicated fury, I thought it was really ironical that they had now become the most ardent supporters of the Republic!

Colonel Tejeda is not a handsome man; his nose is large and covered with fine, blue-red veins, and there is a fierce look about his eyes. Nevertheless, he is as quiet as a mouse, and talks like a devout provincial priest. He knows a great deal about painting

(which always amazes me in these Mexican revolutionists). Tejeda was very curious about the attitude of American people concerning the war in Spain, and when I told him that most Americans thought it was the same one that "we" had fought in 1898, he laughed.

Tejeda's secretary has his small, eight-year-old son here with him. He wears a Republic cap on his head and never says a word. I can't understand why his father brought him to this war.

During the luncheon it seemed that we were not in Barcelona. Endless hot spicy Mexican dishes were served, and I ate so much that I could hardly walk back to the *refugio*.

In the evening I found Pujol and Pancho waiting for me in the lobby of my hotel. We sat in the long, glass-roofed bar and drank several rounds of a curious cocktail, which made the Indians very talkative. Pancho told me that they had been through all the major battles, and his eyes shone when he said that they had both received high military decorations. Pancho waved his hands wildly as he described (vividly) the manner in which the rebels attack: running the tanks ahead, followed by motorized troops which are supported from the air by low-flying planes.

He said that it was a miracle the Loyalists had resisted such warfare for over two years. He told about the long, exhausting march to defend the Ebro, the swollen bleeding feet of the Republicans, and the dramatic recapture of the river. He told about the ordeal of constructing the defense lines in the mountains, which are now holding back the rebel advance.

Both of the Indians were angry at being recalled from their brigades. They don't want to go home again. Pujol said that he could never paint again after having been a soldier.

While we were talking the correspondent of *Humanité* (the French Communist newspaper) came over to our table. He is a young man with a serious, poetic face whom I met through Quintanilla. Since Munich, he wanders around Barcelona with a dejected, forlorn air, as the Spaniards have been cold to him—even though he is a Communist. These Republicans have de-

veloped an unbelievable hatred towards France and all French people since Czechoslovakia was handed over to the Germans.

The correspondent asked the Indians all kinds of questions about their country, hinting that he does not want to return to France. He said that a reaction has already set in, and that Daladier was leading it, through his recent negotiations with the Italians in recognizing the Ethiopian conquest. He added that the Russians were the only realists in Europe in considering their pact with France not worth the paper it was written on, since France betrayed the Czechs.

Tearing up treaties and partitioning countries appear to be turning into a craze. The latest rumor here is that Spain should be cut into two zones: Republican and Fascist. The Spaniards say the English have thought this up, and they say the British actually believe it is a practical way to end this war!

There is a young English Intelligence officer in Barcelona who looks like a college boy in his eternal gray pants and brown tweed jacket. He goes around bemoaning the fate of Catalonia (not Spain as a whole, but merely Catalonia). I have heard him repeat the same identical jargon to whoever he happens to be with. He encourages the Catalans to improve and broaden their autonomous tendencies. From what I heard in England, repeated here in Spain by this Englishman, it is evident the British will do anything and everything to keep Spain from becoming a united and progressive country. It is obvious that a weak Spain is what the English want, to fit neatly into their pattern of running "spheres" over here.

We Americans would be foolish to allow ourselves to be dominated in our relations with Spain by such a policy, as part of our own hemisphere is populated by Spanish-speaking peoples. If Spain, after this war, becomes weak and a Fascist country, it will have a strong anti-democratic influence on South America. Those Latin countries have too many blood ties with Spain, and their peoples cannot return to a pre-Inca or Aztec civilization. They would resent it, on the other hand, if they were overrun with our own culture. A strong Republican Spain

might not fit in with English ideas—but it is obvious it would benefit the United States, because of South America.

Today Del Vayo made a broadcast, appealing to the United States for food. As I listened to his voice I could see his serious "good" face. Really, this man is what I would call a "good" man. He is so humanly good that it almost makes him weak and a dreamer. When he said that the Spanish people would never capitulate through starvation, giving a clear word picture of Spain in Europe's crisis today, I wondered what effect his message would have on the people of our country.

Yesterday there were fourteen Savoia planes bombing the waterfront!

Barcelona, October 8, 1938

I have been drawing in a large convent on the outskirts of the city which is the main concentration point for all refugees. This convent has been badly mutilated from the outside and the interior has been destroyed in such a manner, room by room, that you can feel the violence left by a frenzied mob.

In the Chapel the only objects that have remained untouched are the circular stained-glass windows. A dark rose, blue, and amber light falls from the windows across rows of cots covering the dirt floor of the Chapel. These cots are filled with sick and dying people. The corridors surrounding the patios resemble narrow thoroughfares. They are crowded with men, women, and children who walk back and forth all day long. The cell blocks of the nuns on the top floor are used for those suffering from contagious diseases. There are three nurses and two doctors to care for these hundreds of sick and dying people. One of the young nurses who took me through the building looked as though she were ready to collapse from sheer exhaustion. The dispensary was lined with empty shelves. I saw a half dozen boxes of morphine and that was all. The nurses told me that it was even a problem to have people die, as the shortage of gasoline is so acute that there is no way to transport the bodies for burial!



I drew in an open courtyard filled with children. A wire fence separated them from those ill with T.B. They were very cruel to the tubercular children, sticking their tongues through the wire, shouting names, and laughing at the "ones with a cough."

Before coming home tonight, a little girl with a shaven head took me by the hand up a stairway. She asked me to close my eyes, just as you have often asked—when you want to surprise me with something. But then this little girl pushed me into the darkness of a large chamber filled with dead! When I cried out she opened the door, laughing. I don't know which was the most terrifying, the laughter of the child, or the dead!

I don't like to keep repeating how these incidents with the children of this war hurt me, but they hurt me more than any of the things I have seen older people suffering. It is because I am a mother and you are my little girl, whom I love with the same love these Spanish women have for their children, that I feel so stunned and sad for the very young of Spain.

When I came home tonight the front of the Ritz was roped off and the doorway guarded by soldiers armed with bayonets. They had been put there to keep the crowds of hungry people from storming the dining room.

Before coming up to my room I ran into the wife of the *Daily Mail* correspondent, a young woman born in Barcelona. As the convent where I had been working today made such an impression on me, I asked her about the antireligious feeling among the people of the Republic. She said that the feeling against the Church had been an obsession with the Spaniards for decades, because the Church had forsaken its real purpose in Spain.

Barcelona, October 10, 1938

The American sea captain whom I wrote to you about is staying here. I have seen him each evening when I come from work, sitting in the bar with a very beautiful Spanish woman dressed in deep mourning. If I were not accustomed to such odd-looking women in this hotel, I would have been puzzled by this one,

drinking cocktails in deep mourning! There are several that have bleached hair, combed in Mary Pickford curls, long, black false eyelashes, and little girl dresses. They sit innocently under the palm plants until some dashing officer offers them a drink. The mode for women at the Ritz deviates from provocative, poignant mourners to Mary Pickford angels! But as everyone is so hungry, this sort of camouflage can easily be understood and forgiven!

The captain came over to the desk while I was waiting for my key. He asked me, as a fellow countryman, to share a bottle of champagne with him after dinner. When I made excuses he accused me of being unpatriotic to an American, and so I accepted out of curiosity, inviting him to have coffee with me and the Mexicans, who walk over from their Embassy each night to see what I have drawn during the day.

By the time everyone had arrived, an alert had been sounded. We spent the evening sitting on the floor in candlelight. The captain brought not only champagne but real American macaroons and some condensed milk which he gave me as a present. He did not come alone, either. I met the cook, first engineer, first mate, and wireless operator, as well as his "shadow," a young captain from the Service of Military Investigation (the S.I.M.).

The first engineer had a number of wild stories about the trips their ship had made to Odessa. He hated the Russians, and described the last trip in which the *Wisconsin* was delayed for some weeks in Odessa. He said that the Russian longshoremen were afraid to talk to the Americans, and that once he offered the cook's macaroons to a worker. He was afraid to be seen eating them and so he had locked himself up in a toilet! The engineer was not at all convinced about the "emancipation of the proletariat!"

The captain had collected a lot of stuff from Spain to take back to his "den" in Brooklyn. His most prized possession was the skull, with a crown of gold, of an authentic saint from the Island of Santa Christina. It frightened him a little but he was determined to take it home!

Barcelona, October 11, 1938

In spite of the news that Europe is settling down to a comfortable life with the Nazis, the government here has at last opened the long-awaited offensive against Franco. Tonight the rebels were pushed back towards Grandesa in heavy fighting. The Loyalist militiamen crossed the Santa Madalena ravine under heavy artillery fire. The people of Barcelona are filled with optimism.

I am at last drawing in the munitions factories at *Prat de Llobregat*. The man who drives me out each day has a young son sixteen years old who is taking part in this offensive. He is terribly worried about his son. If the Republic were equipped with enough arms, there would be no question of victory. But an army cannot win against tanks and planes with morale alone.

One of the munitions factories at *Prat de Llobregat* is being run entirely by women. There are only three men left to oversee and inspect their work. The women's arms are black with oil and they work at lightning speed to finish the shells that are loaded with powder and transported to the front in lorries. The success or failure of this offensive will largely depend on what can be produced right here in Catalonia. It is heartbreaking to see part of the machinery in this factory idle, due to lack of materials.

Barcelona, October 14, 1938

Yesterday the leaders of the *Pardido Obrero Unificado Marxists* (P.O.U.M.), a workers' organization led by Trotskyites, were put on trial for attempting to seize control of the government in the Barcelona Putsch of 1937. The Mexicans spent the day listening to the testimony. They are concerned over what happens to these people, as Trotsky is in Mexico, and they are convinced he is working with the Nazis to stir up trouble in Mexico as well as in Spain.

The Ritz is filling up with the Commission that Dr. Negrin asked the League of Nations to appoint to supervise the with-

drawal of the Foreign Volunteers. The government has managed to find enough food for them to eat. This has provoked a lot of grumbling among the Spanish officers on furlough. They want the Commission to have a good "taste" of the regular Barcelona diet. One of the members of the British delegation, General Molesworth, has the room next to mine. Every time an alarm is sounded at night, he runs out into the hall in his bathrobe. Already he has lost so much sleep that this war is becoming a grim actuality for him and not just a dry editorial in the *London Times*.

I forgot to tell you about a concert I went to on Columbus Day in the Opera House, given to the people of Barcelona by the famous Catalan cellist, Pablo Casals. Generals Rojo, Mija, and Cordon sat next to me, Azana and his wife in the adjoining box, and the *Passionaria* just below.

During the performance the lights went out. We sat in the dark listening to the bombs and not to Casals. A woman became hysterical, screaming something about her dead sons at the *Passionaria*, who didn't look at her but smiled and shrugged her shoulders. This gave me an unpleasant memory of the woman who has such power over the Spanish people.

## CHAPTER XXVII

Mora de Ebro, October 15, 1938

It is late afternoon. I am lying in a field of tall grass about a mile from the Ebro River, writing to you. Last night around six o'clock, Juan Grijalbo—a young Catalan from the Generalitat whom Mr. Del Vayo assigned to look after me—called me hurriedly on the phone, asking if I wanted to go to the front. He said that he had a pass for me, but I would have to be ready by four in the morning.

Pujol and Pancho were with me when I received this call. When I told them I was going to the front, they acted like two old grandfathers, begging me not to go. At four this morning I found them waiting for me in front of the hotel, shivering in the brisk cold air.

And then Grijalbo drove up in a Mercedes car, with two small Republican flags placed over each headlight, and the Indians jumped on the running board, pleading to come along. To leave them behind was like shutting two small children in their rooms. Only the stern words of "authority" from Fusimana, the political commissar of the Fifth Army, finally convinced my friends that they could not return to the front.

The ride across the winding hills towards these high mountains of the Ebro was so beautiful, there were moments when I forgot completely where we were going. Besides Grijalbo and Fusimana and the driver, there is a young, talkative newspaperman named Mora in our party who asked me endless questions all day long about New York, Roosevelt, contemporary American writers, and John L. Lewis. Mora is twenty-three, Fusimana twenty-eight and Grijalbo twenty-seven. I have never met such determined and informed young people. If they are an example of what a liberal Republican education has accomplished in helping to form their judgments about the world of today, it is certainly a tribute to their country. Talking to them is almost like a good game of tennis . . . they keep you on the move.

At noon, we drove off from the main highway onto a dusty,

winding road that ended in the grounds of a "confiscated" country house. The moment our car was in sight of the house a band began to play some military tune, and Grijalbo's face turned into a broad grin. He thought the music was for us. Later we found out from the officer who greeted us at the door of this mansion that he was expecting the arrival from Barcelona of the Commissar General of the Army, who was to address the graduating class of new commissars.

While we were standing by the door talking and being introduced, another car swung into the driveway, and the band played the tune all over again—but the dark-skinned man in uniform who stepped from the car ordered the band to stop playing. He looked so stern and serious that I was afraid. I thought, if he stops the band from playing, he is mean enough to cancel my pass to the front.

Fusimana introduced me to Bibiano Fernandez Osorio-Tafall, the Commissar General of the Spanish Republican Armies. He spoke, to my surprise, in English. He asked me immediately, without smiling, for my papers. He examined my passport carefully page by page.

Poor Grijalbo was very nervous. He stood on one foot and then the other trying to explain who I was, and that Del Vayo had arranged for me to visit the Ebro. Señor Osorio asked for my pass and didn't give it back. He put it in his pocket.

Finally he said, "I am tired of foreign tourists of the war. That is just what you all are: tourists of the war." Then he turned to the commanding officer of this "school" and asked if the men who were to receive their rank as full-fledged commissars were ready. The commanding officer took us into a large drawing room, now turned into a study hall. Rows of school desks filled this room.

Señor Osorio took off his military cap, placed it on the speaker's table, and looked into the faces of the young men. I watched his brown eyes move from one soldier to another, as though he were analyzing each individual man. And then he started to speak in the clear accent of Galicia about Spain. He spoke with

great simplicity about the past history of this country, and gave a short, dynamic analysis of what had happened to Spain since that hot day in July, 1936, when the Franco rebellion against the Republic commenced.

There was not a sound in the room as everyone listened to this man talk about the principles of a democratic government, in comparison with Fascist ideologies. He explained the objectives of the Republic, and the consequences of a Franco victory in relation to Spain's future.

His speech contained no demagogism. Kant, the great German philosopher, once wrote that "ideas are the parents of irresistible illusions." When Señor Osorio had finished, I watched those young Spaniards leave their classroom, and I could see in the expression of their eyes that nothing could ever destroy their illusion to keep their Republic a living reality. Even though the Commissar General had taken away my pass to the front, I couldn't deny that I admired him. He made me believe in myself. He seemed like a good and wise teacher one remembers as a child, before his confidence has been shaken by a feeling of hopelessness or despair in yearning for the world to be like a star. . . .

I don't know why he gave me back my military pass, but he did, just before he left the school. That was the only time his serious face broke into a smile, as he said that he didn't really believe an ordinary tourist of the war would have the nerve to cross the Ebro!

Late this afternoon when we arrived at this small farmhouse near the river, I was glad that we had to wait for the twilight before crossing. I am very tired.

I have seen my first Americans—from the Lincoln Brigade—so very young and so very homesick. I watched them painting long white bunting signs with red letters: "They shall not pass the Ebro. Viva la Republica."

Now none of these volunteers can fight again. They are going to be sent from Spain, in accordance with the plans of Dr. Negrin to withdraw all foreign combatants from the Republican

forces. Johnnie Gathes, their political commissar, is a small red-head from Brooklyn.

During the time I've been lying in the grass I have seen my first plane battle. The Americans called it a "dog fight" and they watched the planes as though they were at a football game.

With the 5th Army, October 16, 1938

We crossed the Ebro River in the afterglow of the sunset yesterday. All the way across the bridge, I kept my eyes closed, thinking of you, while I pinched myself very hard, trying to divert my fear by hurting myself. It seemed that an eternity had passed until the wheels of our car hit the hard road on the other side of the swaying pontoon bridge. Across the river Mora got out of the car and stood on the running board, directing the driver on the long climb up into the mountains. The sunset had left the earth a golden red and our mountain looked quiet and beautiful, until the landscape began to fit itself together like a jigsaw puzzle, and I saw a concealed weapon behind every tree. It made me dizzy, because at times I would just see the mountain. Then something would move. As the olive color of the Republican uniforms are identical to the tone of the vegetation of the mountain, these moving forms seemed like a dream.

The road leading up to the front was badly constructed. I could tell that it had been recently cut into the mountain, and even if hundreds of heavy trucks had passed over it, the earth was still soft, and at the turns this softness made the road dangerous. While we were climbing the afterglow turned into darkness. It was very quiet. No one spoke in our car. Then, suddenly, I heard a voice singing a Flamenco song, and the last trailing note was carried on up the mountain by another voice. These Flamenco songs are so inhumanly lovely and have such a hypnotic effect that it seemed as though some ancient Moorish sorcerer were hidden in the dark mountain, and we were being enticed into his cave by the music.

But halfway up the mountain the wailing notes died away.



Our driver snapped off the lights, and we moved like a snail through the intense darkness until we were all ordered out of the car. The men strapped their belongings on their backs. We were each given a rifle and told to start climbing, bending close to the ground.

Fusimana knew this mountain as well as he knew his gun. He encouraged us to keep moving up its rocky slope, until I thought my back would break in two. We would stumble and fall, hurting ourselves against the sharp rocks, and at times losing whoever was in front. Finally we heard someone crying. It was Grijalbo. He was lying face down on a large flat rock. He said he couldn't move another step because his leg hurt. Grijalbo had been shot in the leg a year ago, and although his wound was completely healed, he began to remember it again. Fusimana swore and threatened to leave Grijalbo on his rock if he couldn't pull himself together. Finally he started to move, dragging himself against the earth and sobbing like a baby.

There were moments when I thought I couldn't take another step. Even though it was bitter cold and the wind made me shiver, I was hot and flushed. Nothing that I had ever done in this life seemed to hold me as steady as this mountain. I felt that all I had ever wanted was to wait on the high peaks. I thought of all the people I had known who had talked about making the world a new world, and I wondered where they were while I was climbing this mountain.

Further on Fusimana left us alone on a steep ledge. We lay on our backs resting, looking up at the stars. They were very small, and as they seemed so far away, I was afraid again. I wanted to cry. Finally we heard Fusimana coming back. He had someone else with him, and they led the way to a narrow path along the rim of the mountain. This soldier told us not to slip, or we would roll a thousand feet below into the Ebro River.

We came upon the headquarters of the Fifth Army suddenly. After the intense darkness I could not see at first the faces of the officers standing in the middle of a cave brightly lighted by electricity.

Terguena, a young colonel, was sitting in a swivel chair at a desk, wrapped in a great olive cape, and he was staring at us through his horn-rimmed glasses as though we were prisoners. Finally he asked Fusimana for some documents, and while they were reading them, I looked around the cave. It seemed that the furnishings of an entire house had been dragged up this mountain. There were beds, blue velvet chairs, a victrola with a morning-glory horn, and the earth had been covered with a rug. Lying near Terguena's swivel chair I saw a round, dirty, white puppy.

I was left alone with the dog, while the others disappeared into an adjoining cave. When I sat down in one of the velvet chairs to wipe the dirt from my face, it was like sitting on a cushion of pins. The chair was alive with fleas.

Before I had time to arrange my hair, a militiaman came to take me into the mess hall, an adjoining cave, with a long wooden table, chairs, and a stove set against the wall.

At the head of the table I saw my first Russian in Spain. He was dressed in a Soviet uniform, with the stars of a general. The Spanish officers acted like little boys in front of the general, who completely ignored us all. He talked constantly on a telephone with a long trailing wire while he ate his dinner. Before he had finished eating, a beautiful woman with gray hair cut short like a boy's came into the cave. She was Russian, too, and I wondered why she was staying at the front. Fusimana, sitting next to me, dug his boot heel into my toe and said softly, "You have seen no one—do you understand?"

Aside from what I had eaten in the Mexican Embassy, the food in the cave was the first palatable nourishment I had had since I crossed the Spanish frontier. The Republican Army food was a curious mixture (aside from the eternal Spanish rice). There were tins of meat from England, Russia, Norway; the butter was completely Russian. There were great boxes of English cookies, which the Spaniards nibbled at in a finicky manner, as if they didn't want to eat them.

When we returned to Terguena's cave, he asked Fusimana about some supplies that had never reached the front. From

what I overheard, rumors were wild all over the front concerning food and stores hoarded away in Barcelona. His men were in desperate need of clothing, munitions, and re-enforcements; but the thing he raged about was shoes. It seems that most of the Fifth Army is holding the Ebro—without shoes!

Even if these supplies were lacking, Terguena was confident the rebels would never penetrate the three lines of fortifications in these mountains. What had happened in Munich only made him more determined to fight on against the Spanish Fascists. I learned with surprise that Terguena is just my age. It seems unbelievable that a young man of twenty-eight could be commanding this sector of the front.

I was given a small cave to myself, where blankets were laid across the earth, and even though I had taken two strong sleeping pills, it was impossible to sleep. I kept my eyes open watching my own guard—a young boy of about sixteen—who sat dozing away in the mouth of the cave with his rifle across his knees. During the night there was a fair amount of shelling, but it was not so frightening as the bombs of Barcelona. Because it was so scattered and light, I thought these shells were crossing over the fronts as a reminder to these divided Spaniards that they were still facing one another.

This morning when I got up, around four-thirty, it was still going on. I could see the Ebro in the valley below. It was like a narrow yellow ribbon through the fog; when I saw how far below this mountain it actually was, I wondered why the Loyalists had not constructed some sort of barrier along the ledge of the mountain. Certainly any greenhorn could easily make a misstep and fall right into it.

My young guard took me to a wooden trough filled with water and politely turned his back while I washed my face. While I was washing he asked me in a whisper if I were an American, and then he told me how he had always wanted to see New York, and that he was fighting to make Spain a democracy just like ours!

During the day I had a chance to see a good number of troops.

None of them had any shoes. They wore ragged canvas sandals. Some had woolen jackets, while others shivered in flimsy cotton shirts. It is so cold already that I don't see how they will bear up through the winter unless Dr. Negrin can find them some warm clothes.

They were all mere boys, and their officers rarely over thirty-five. I saw a "dugout" school for the illiterate and the caves were all lined with "wall newspapers." During the day I heard a number of broadcasts sent over from the Franco lines—and they were almost comical. They asked the Republicans to come back to a Spain where justice reigns and where no one is hungry. Nothing Franco could say would induce these people to surrender . . . especially when his mouthpieces kept repeating that the war was already lost!

Falset, October 18, 1938

We crossed back over the river at three this morning in small Italian metal boats. Falset, in the dawn, is a village lying in ruins. There is only the Cathedral, which is filled with sleeping soldiers. I stood in the doorway watching them, while Mora tried to find us some food.

Seeing the soldiers asleep in the Cathedral of Falset made me feel deeply religious. These men looked so pathetically tired, forlorn, and miserable, and the Cathedral had an almost human radiance about it—like a living person, full of understanding, compassion, and forgiveness. I saw a lone officer bending over a small flame, moving a few sticks of wood together to keep them burning. His blackened hands were so awkward. They made him look very helpless.

Here, close to the Ebro, one feels the deep misery of the Spanish people. The river is like a stream of pus running from an infected wound. It is an ugly river, and as the earth has this reddish hue and the water is yellow and the sleeping soldiers a deep violet from the reflected light of the rose window of the Cathedral, all of this made them more a part of the flag of the

Republic. But I am beginning to doubt whether they will ever win the war and keep their flag. To have lived with them through this time of Munich, to see them so completely deserted—all of this has changed the outside world for me. I have never seen such inspired people—but their courage is not enough. They need weapons.

The women and children of Falset pick at the ruins, as though they were going to find something. I have been wondering what they are looking for—what it is they expect to find.

With the 87th Brigade, October 19, 1938

We are within a few miles of Tarragona in a country house where the 87th Brigade has its headquarters. I had a "bath" in the Mediterranean and even went fishing for our dinner in a boat with painted flowers on the bow.

Floating along the sea in this gay boat, I looked back towards the land. Spain was separated from me. It was like a land that I had never seen. It looked so beautifully majestic from the sea. The olive and almond groves were sturdy and healthy. It was not until I saw the sun shining on the oblong steel forms lying under the olive trees that I remembered the violence that was raging in the mountains towards the west, where the sun was setting.

When we returned to the shore, the young Major who had sailed our boat sat on the beach and told us all the plans he had for his life when the Republic was victorious. His optimism had me almost convinced; but when I looked over to the drill ground that had been laid alongside the garden of this country house, and saw how young the recruits of the 87th Brigade were, I knew all over again that they represented the end of what could be trained into soldiers for the Republic. If they had been a year younger they would have served no purpose whatsoever, except perhaps to hunt sparrows with slingshots.

The towns along this coast are the most medieval I have seen in Europe. They are not of this century nor of the last. They

make one realize the backwardness of the people. And because I don't believe people can go forward under Fascism, I wonder what will happen to the people of these villages if the Republic is wiped out.

Barcelona, October 24, 1938

Today in the valley of the Sierra de Prades near the famous Cistercian Abbey of Poblet, where the Kings of Aragon lie in eternal sleep, I witnessed the disbanding of the International Brigades. I would never have been able to see this historical event if Señor Osorio-Tafall had not surprised me by telephoning and asking me to accompany him.

It was raining heavily when we left Barcelona. During the long drive to Poblet, I asked Señor Osorio why the Republican Army was filled with "political commissars." He said that unfortunately few professional Army officers remained loyal to the Republic, and that this system of political commissars was the only practical method of keeping discipline and instilling confidence and political unity into an Army that had never been professionally trained.

I asked Señor Osorio what political party he belonged to. He said "Left Republican." I knew that this was the party of Azaña, the President of the Republic, and so I asked what kind of man the President was.

Osorio said that Azaña was a competent, cultivated liberal, but that he did not have the stamina to be a wartime president. He said that Azaña had a frightful weakness in wanting to be a great novelist, and that he was forever locking himself up at the most critical times, writing reams of pages for romantic novels.

I asked Osorio about himself. He said that before the war he had been a professor of biology in the University of Madrid, and the editor of the Madrid newspaper, *Politica*. He had visited the United States for propaganda purposes before the offensive on Madrid, returning to Spain immediately when it began. He had studied at the University of Cambridge and at the Sorbonne,

lived in Germany, and made one brief trip to Soviet Russia. When I asked him how he felt about that country, he said he admired what the Russians are doing for Russia, but that he felt that people were afraid to express themselves intelligently as individuals; that, being a Spaniard, and Spaniards being rabid individualists, Communism could never be successful in Spain. I said I had heard most of the commissars were Communists in the Army and instilling their line of political propaganda. He smiled when he told me some people would like to believe this.

When we reached Poblet the rain was still falling. The surrounding hills were covered with the volunteers of the International Brigades. We left the car near a high red brick wall which enclosed a vast patio adjoining an ancient farmhouse.

From photos I had seen, I recognized Colonel Lister (the stonemason from Galicia) standing ankle deep in the mud of this patio. Lister has become an almost legendary figure during this war; just as Zapata was during the Mexican Revolution. He is what is called a "natural leader."

When I was introduced to Lister, I looked at his face carefully. His eyes are widely set, under heavy, well-formed eyebrows. Even though he was smiling, his mouth looked sensuous and cruel. The lower lip was full, while the upper lip was thin and straight. His chin was determined, and his arms and hands . . . were the arms and hands of a stonemason!

Lister paced back and forth in the mud, looking nervously at his watch from time to time. Surveying the masses of Volunteers, he said that they represented practically every country in Europe, as well as Mexico, Cuba, and many other Latin-American Republics, and added that there were many Canadians. Pointing towards a brigade of Poles, who were dressed in long gray coats, caps, and ear flaps, and worn boots caked with mud—as though they had marched all the way from Poland to Spain, Lister described them as the most devilish fighters of all the Volunteers.

I saw a number of Scots dressed in kilts. And then there were the blond, blue-eyed Finns and Germans, dark-haired Italians, French, Rumanians. It seemed difficult to believe that men of

so many nationalities had come to Spain to fight for the Republic.

Colonel Modesto (the carpenter and another great natural leader of the Loyalist Armies) arrived, aggravated and nervous. He was afraid the Volunteers were getting tired and grumbling, and that they wouldn't want to stand in the mud any longer waiting for another speech!

Around two o'clock Negrin finally arrived, dressed smartly in whipcord breeches, leather boots, and a beret. He didn't seem a bit aware that he was late. His speech was long-winded and resembled one of his biology lectures. The most important thing he said was that he considered these Volunteers equal to Spaniards in the sacrifices they had made for the Republic.

When Colonel Modesto spoke, his voice was choked with emotion. I could hardly look at him when it began to quaver and he started to cry. Looking down into the thousands of eyes of these Volunteers, I wondered where they would go now that they must leave Spain. They gave an ironic twist to this whole summer. These were the men who had helped save Madrid; they had fought unselfishly, without thought of personal gain, to help an abandoned Republic survive two and a half years of bloody war . . . and I knew that after today they would be the most forgotten and lost men in all Europe.

When the speakers had finished, a band played a Spanish song, and then it broke into the *Merry Widow* waltz. The Poles and Germans waltzed in pairs. When the music changed back to Spanish tunes, the Volunteers formed large, circular groups and danced together, with paper flags waving in their hats.

At dusk we left Poblet. The driver had a time reaching the main highway. The roads were overflowing with the marching Volunteers. Our headlights caught their tin plates and cooking utensils in their reflection. What an assortment of equipment! No two sets of gear were the same. It seemed that these men had strapped their most beloved possessions on their backs when they left home to come to this war in Spain.

Before we reached Barcelona, I asked Osorio if he really be-



lieved in his heart that the Republic had a chance to win. He said, "If we are defeated, our defeat will never be a defeat. It is 'inevitable' in the destiny of Spain that a Republic will be victorious." And then he added that it was inevitable for Europe, in the future, to be united through a federation of Republics.

Barcelona, October 25, 1938

This afternoon I stood with Ambassador Tejada on a wooden platform that had been constructed during the morning, watching the people of Barcelona officially honor the International Brigades.

Beside us stood the British and French military commissions. The French Colonel seemed like a worried Saint Bernard dog (I thought). His lips moved, counting off the Volunteers, while the British officers looked cold and bored.

Tejada had his military and naval attachés standing beside him. His secretary held his small son on his shoulders, while we watched the different Brigades march down the Gran Via Diagonal. The Italians of the *Garibaldi* received an enthusiastic ovation from the crowds, especially from the young Spanish girls, who threw flowers before their marching feet. When the parade was finished the women danced their native Saradana in the streets.

Before returning to the hotel I walked the long distance back to the *refugio*. I wanted to see how the old man was getting along . . . and the rest of his family, whom I have grown to love. It was almost dark when I arrived, and the children were crying out loud in the candlelight. Their cries made me so lonely for you. I purposely sat in the room of the Asturians on the old man's box and told them about Poblet and the parade that I had just seen. They were afraid when they heard that the International Brigades were leaving Spain, and when I saw how afraid they were, I didn't have the heart to tell them that I was going away, too—tomorrow.

The woman Clotilde and her son walked all the way back to

the hotel with me. When we reached the white marble fountain she looked at the lighted windows of the hotel and asked me what it was like inside, and what the people ate in those lighted rooms. I told her the people ate very little, and then she said, "I can stand this hunger, but the children can't go on with their hunger." She looked at her twelve-year-old son and asked me what I thought would become of him. She said the older people accepted their fate—they still had the strength to project their faith into the very young—but that boys like her son of twelve were beginning to hate everyone.

When I went up to my room I sat for a long time by the window, looking down at the white marble fountain. I thought about Clotilde's son—and I wondered what deep wounds his frustrated bitterness and misery of mind and body would leave in his imagination.

While I was thinking these thoughts, someone knocked at the door and told me I was wanted at the desk. When I went downstairs I found the adjutant of Señor Osorio. He said that if I cared to drive up into the mountains in back of the city, I was invited to attend the farewell . . . for the officers of the Brigades.

When I followed him out into the street and stepped into the car of the Commissar General, I found Osorio dressed in a blue civilian suit. He told me that he had heard I was leaving Spain the next day, and that he wanted to be like an ordinary human being for a few hours.

At the top of the *Tibidado* he asked the driver to stop the car. We got out and he took my hand and led me towards the edge of the mountain. And then he walked away from where I was, and stood facing the west, in the direction of the Ebro. I was glad that he did not speak whatever he was thinking, and that we returned at once to the car and drove on to the gathering for the Brigade officers.

When we arrived at a very secluded house in the mountains, the Republican Naval, Army, and Air ministers were standing in a group in the main dining hall. Negrin sat at the head of a long table with red carnations strewn down the center. He spoke in

German, French, English, and Italian, paying tribute to each nationality that had fought for the Republic.

When he sat down a German Colonel, Hans, made a glowing address, followed by an Italian, who spoke about the great liberal leaders of Italy, Garibaldi and Mazzini.

On the way back to Barcelona, Osorio commented upon the integrity of Dr. Negrin. He said that Negrin had an iron will and an objective insight into the character of the Spanish people. He told me that Negrin's "Resist, resist" was the only hope for the survival of the Republic. He said that the Loyalists had to go on resisting until the Fascists attacked another European nation. I asked him if he seriously thought they would. He nodded, and added that he only hoped they would do it soon, to force whatever was left of democratic countries to stand together before they were separated completely.

Barcelona, October 26, 1938

This is my last letter to you from Spain. This morning, after I had visited the children's restaurants which are being supported by the Army, I went back to my *refugio*. I gave away all my clothing except what is left on my back, but I still did not tell the people good-bye.

The Admiral took me for a walk to a small park near the waterfront. We sat beside a statue of a nineteenth century lady with a bustle and a real umbrella in her hand! The Admiral was very tired. He told me the only things one could really believe in in this world were hope, faith, and love! And it seemed to him there was not much of that left! He is beginning to look upon the war as something that will end like the rain . . . that it can't go on forever. He said he felt too old to share in the future events of his country and it would be an ironic tragedy if his sons would, after this costly effort to keep a Republic alive, revert to the Monarchy in the years to come.

There are such long-range preparations going on in this world today—far too great for one individual to change. Sometimes one

finds oneself far from the beaten path of what he has chosen to do. . . . Leaving Spain, I will never forget the faces of these people who are victims of a tragedy greater than their own immediate war. People need more than an immediate security for their happiness. There have always been, throughout history, struggles like this struggle of the Spanish people. Human beings need freedom, and whatever we have of freedom today we owe to those who have had the courage to project their faith into the future.

I have a certain sense of guilt in leaving this city, knowing that I can "ride" away from this hunger and misery. But in the drawings I have made here in Spain I have tried to express—through simple line—the agonizing effect of war upon innocent victims: the women and children. I have tried with all my heart to portray their feelings through what I felt and saw in their eyes—and hands.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

Paris, October 27, 1938

Before I left Barcelona yesterday, the Mexican Ambassador came to say good-bye, with Pujol and Pancho. They gave me a large bouquet of red roses, which I threw one by one from the window of the automobile on the way to the French border.

It was a beautiful fall afternoon. The earth was still wet from the rain of the early morning. When the sun finally set, it disappeared like a great glowing ball of fire behind the mountains in the direction of the Ebro, and it seemed to absorb into its last rays the tragic reflection of all that is Spain today.

By the time I arrived where the "nonintervention" guards were stationed, it was dark. My luggage was examined hurriedly; no one seemed to care about a foreigner leaving Spain. I could feel, in the absent-mindedness of the guards, that this war had become insignificant to the French. They acted like spectators leaving a *corrieda* before the sixth bull is finally dead simply because he is being killed badly, but knowing that eventually he will have to die.

On the way to Paris I read the papers. Daladier claimed that "peace and co-operation are realizable between the French and German people." He said that Munich was not a capitulation for France, and that if he had felt at any time that he could not say no to the Germans, he would have returned immediately to France and called upon the nation to resist. He blames the Communists for wanting war, and he has broken definitely with all the "left" parties in his government.

When I arrived in Paris, faithful Ocky was waiting for me at the Hotel Champs-Élysées. She had bought me a beautiful white lace nightgown and had the bed ready with a hot water bottle. After I had rested a few hours, Ocky broke the news to me that the Prefecture of Police in Samoreau had taken all of the belongings from our house because I had been in Spain and was considered a dangerous "Red!"

There is no use going into the details of what I went through

this afternoon, in the Prefecture of Samoreau. Returning to this sort of "civilization," I feel that my only chance to adapt myself to it is to see for myself what Germany actually is. I can never have the moral strength to go on unless a miracle happens to "appease" my mind.

I have made reservations on the plane for London. I want to talk to Mr. Kennedy. He seems to be one of the people who is convinced that we have to live in the same world with Hitler.

José Beigamin, the Spanish Catholic writer, has written a beautiful article about my Spanish drawings.

London, November 4, 1938

Last night when I arrived in London I went straight to bed. Even though I have rested most of today, I am still worn out. I feel like a blind man who has suddenly regained his sight but still cannot get used to the objects that he sees. That is, electric lights and store windows of clothes and food seem like things I can hardly remember.

This morning I spoke to Mr. Kennedy. He was in excellent spirits. I told him a bit about Spain, but he did not seem to listen to a thing I had to say until I remarked that I wanted to go to Germany to see Hitler's Art Projects. Mr. Kennedy told me how close Europe had come to war while I was "away." He said that he was glad it had been avoided over a problem as insignificant as the Sudeten Germans . . . and that if I did go to Germany I would find that it was not such a bad place after all. Mr. Kennedy said that if the German people wanted a Nazi dictatorship, we had no right to interfere, and that he really believed it was possible for democracies and dictatorships to work together.

I spoke to Freddie Oeschner long distance in Berlin. He is glad I am flying over. I'm invited to stay with the Oeschners. Freddie has been in Germany for nearly fifteen years. He certainly ought to be a "historian" by now.

This afternoon I bought some sweaters at Harrod's and I tried to find a pair of shoes. I'm still wearing the same shoes that I

wore in Barcelona. After retrieving my luggage from the Prefecture at the last moment yesterday, there was no time to unpack. But . . . after searching all over London, I still have no shoes. The Englishwomen's feet are too big, the French too small. We Americans are something in between Anglo-Latin sizes!

I had a chance to see the trenches dug in the lawn of Hyde Park during the crisis. I should think by now they ought to have shoveled some of that dirt back . . . if it is true everything is so hunky-dory!

Berlin, November 7, 1938

I arrived around midnight yesterday at the Berlin Airport. Dorothy Oeschner was waiting for me. She had the American flag draped across the radiator of her Ford. When I had finished with the customs, we drove to her apartment and she was sensible enough to let me go straight to bed.

This morning my first glimpse of Berlin from the window of this building, which faces a quaint street called Maienstrasse, made a decidedly pleasant impression. I can only say that I found the houses "homey" and pleasing to look at . . . and because the people who were walking in the street were blond and fair, I almost felt that I had returned to America.

Freddie Oeschner came into the living room rather late. He had been working most of the night. He told me that he had made arrangements for Dorothy to take me on a thorough tour of "German Art"; in fact, we had permission to visit one of Goering's pet projects, a new military barracks on the outskirts of Berlin bearing his name. Freddie asked me to be careful not to make any wisecracks in front of people. I told him I was in no mood for wisecracks, that I was really coming from Barcelona, not London. It was not surprising that even Freddie regarded the war in Spain like an old shoe.

Dorothy and I were late in starting to the Goering barracks, as the hardest task here seems to be collecting enough food for a meal. There is no butter or cream and very little meat. On the

drive across Berlin, I saw my first Jewish stores. The window-panes were painted with large yellow letters which spelled out "I am a Jew." I felt like a child again, spelling out chalk marks on a sidewalk, where Johnnie says he hates Tommy. Or one felt that Hallowe'en was just past and the children had had a night of it with their pails of yellow paint. But . . . when we passed several public squares and I saw benches painted bright yellow with forlorn-looking old men sitting on them, it was a shock. I can't understand how anyone could enjoy a pleasant hour in a park, looking at the people forced to sit on yellow benches marked off like houses in quarantine.

We stopped for a few minutes to look at the Olympic Stadium, a magnificent piece of architecture. When we arrived at the Goering barracks it seemed more like a smart real estate development. There were numerous paved streets lined with trees and flowers, individual houses for the "rookie soldiers." The officers' quarters might have been swanky apartments—except for the doorman, who stood at attention with a gun! In the center of these buildings there was a small park surrounded by stores, movies, and a gymnasium.

In the administration building, our papers were carefully examined, and while we were waiting for an escort, Dorothy pointed to a poster of screaming eagles over the doorway. She said, "Underneath those eagles it says 'Germany, Your Colonies!'" I told her I was not surprised because I had heard in Spain that Hitler promised to guarantee France's frontiers if France would return Togoland and the Cameroons.

Finally, after waiting some time, we were taken into a large drafting room. There must have been a hundred architects bending over their drafting boards. The director spoke excellent English and I was surprised at his knowledge of our country. He laughed a great deal about the W.P.A., and said that in Germany there weren't any relief projects; what people did in Germany each day was a permanent thing towards sharing the rebuilding of their country. He said that it was a pity that a country as great as America had no "organization or definite



direction." And then he went on to explain that when an artist was commissioned to paint a mural in Germany, he worked as a co-ordinated unit with the architect. No wall painting was selected by competition; artists were chosen according to their established merits, given a plan of the building, and a knowledge of everything that was to be placed in it—and then they worked together with the craftsmen who were selected to supply the interior furnishings, etc., so that a finished room was a perfect unit.

As we walked through this building and came across the murals, I was surprised that they did not contain some propaganda message. Most of them were purely decorative—each room was furnished with exquisite taste. But in spite of it all, one felt the meaning of everything that represented Nazi Germany. Hitler's face would pop up, lighted dramatically, at the end of a long hallway, or there would be a streamlined eagle fiercely flying across an empty wall. The symbols of the Third Reich were used in telling the story of this new Germany. There were no pictorial "illustrations" on the meaning of National Socialism. I came across many beautifully designed iron gates, and through the scrolls of metal there was always an insignificant but perfectly conceived symbol. As the afternoon wore on, I realized the effect these symbols had on me. One's imagination is set free to improvise by a symbol, one is not caught in a vacuum of looking at another's conception of an idea. This is what happens in a purely pictorial manifestation, when one finds his mind groping to understand what the artist felt. Symbols leave one as free as the moon, sun, or stars. The imagination can reach almost any height of adoration—or fear!

Before dark, I had a good chance to see most of Berlin. Hitler's streamlined Chancellory is a formidable structure, but in spite of this "new designing," it has the same underlying bastard Greek tendency that exists in the over-ornate buildings and monuments of the old Berlin. As far as I can see, the "soul" of Germany is still the same, judging by the warlike monument of William the First, one of the most terrifying mountains of bronze I have ever

seen. The Emperor is riding a prancing horse led by a Greek nymph on a column that is guarded around a raised platform, with growling lions squatting over flags, guns, and broken chains. The sculptors and architects of today may have taken off the curlicues of the past, but the sentiment of almighty power is still in their blood. Even the pieces of sculpture "dedicated to life" are conceived for war. The monument titled the *Tree of Life*, in which a male figure clasps a woman while three children play about their feet, is supposed to represent the virility of the nation through mass childbirth. Dorothy explained that this bronze was unveiled during the "Give me four years' time" exhibit in 1933.

This morning in Paris, Von Rath, the third secretary of the German Embassy, was shot by a young Jew named Herschel Grynszpan.

Berlin, November 8, 1938

I spent most of today in the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum and I'm glad that I had the chance to see some of the great German painters of the past before I went to see the contemporary easel pictures of today.

I had always felt that Germany, during the period of the great schools of painting in Florence and Vienna, had not produced a master equal to the Italians of that time. Although there was the beginning of what they called the *School of Bohemia* in the fourteenth century, Diego Rivera told me that Charles IV commissioned a number of painters to work on the church and castle of Karlstein, near Prague; he thought the frescoes of Theodorich, Nicolaus Wurmser, and Kunz were the best examples of this school, but that the great Meister Wilhelm who painted the Cologne Cathedral far surpassed all other artists of that time. I feel in his work the skill of a craftsman—a wood-carver more than a painter. I don't like the tedious conception of plastic form which kills whatever emotion the Germans try to portray in their painting. Perhaps it has to do with painting be-

ing realized through a tool in one's hand, and the fact that Germans are adept in handling tools. Music and writing are freer, in a sense. They do not depend so much on purely manual labor.

At any rate, I feel that the emotional fire of the early Italians never burned in the hearts of the early Germans, although the Reformation did a great deal in setting loose weird fancies of early German legends. In the work of Grünewald one sees this; his nightmarish compositions with creatures half animal, half human, in the midst of sadistic battles, have an emotional realism that is lacking in his religious pictures. Most of the crucifixions by this painter show Christ daubed with blood from head to foot; the effect is of our Saviour suffering from some contagious disease, more terrible than any crucifixion. In fact, most German art of the early fifteenth century leaves me with little consolation on the spiritual side.

Today I saw many canvases of Albrecht Dürer that I had never seen before. In Dürer, German art began to have a soul. Perhaps he found his soul in Italy, as he loved that country dearly and lived there many years; or perhaps it was his close friendship with Bellini Giovanni that helped him to overcome the stiffness of a master craftsman. Dürer bolted from the trend of his time and became a Catholic when his contemporaries were being converted to the Reformation and Protestantism.

In telling you this I want to say something about Cranach, and what is called "realism in painting." I have often wondered how an artist could perfect a technique of almost photographic exactness as far as textures are concerned, and then somehow arrive at a finished composition with the effect of innocent naïveté. Cranach's nude women have all the quality of flesh and blood, but they are always doing such "silly real" things. For instance, his canvas of Lukretia stabbing herself with a long knife while she walks with a thin veil across her not-to-be-seen parts, while her head tilts coyly, makes one wonder about Cranach's realism!

Holbein will always be the most human of German painters for me. Perhaps it is the variety of people he painted. He must

have had a rare understanding of human beings, both as a painter and as a diplomat.

After the fifteenth century, German art petered out. It came feebly to life again around 1810, principally through the painters of France—but the trend in Germany at this time was for painters to wander back to Italy, and most of them became converted to Catholicism, trying to recapture a “Christian ideal.”

During the period of Modern French painting of our time, German art was dominated by the complete social chaos that followed after the World War. What I saw of modern painting this afternoon is supposed to be a hygienic renaissance of the human figure. Hitler has a set of rules, to be followed both by landscape and figure painters. Figure painters must portray a “pure Aryan” type; family compositions must have at least four children; single portraits are bad academic glorifications of the leaders of the Third Reich. And a landscape artist is not allowed to paint out of the section of the country where he was born. Hitler believes that one is imbued with a mystic vision through the soil on which he was born. No Jewish artist is allowed to exhibit at all.

Today I bought a dress that is made out of wood. I still can't believe it. In fact, there was not one “natural” item in this department store; everything was synthetic. In an arcade on Unter den Linden, I spent a long time looking at photographs of Hitler and I bought a series of tiny “flap” photos which, when you riffle them fast, make him come to life like a miniature movie. The one I have shows him making a speech and if you riffle the pages slowly the gestures are so calculated and ridiculous they make you laugh—although that is one thing I have not seen people do in this city.

The people in the streets look worn and tired. Life is completely regulated. There are signs every few feet, telling one what to eat and believe. Money is controlled. Four dollars a day is about all you can spend. In a certain sense, this makes life very simple—you know exactly what you can and cannot do. Even though certain things could be achieved through such a

system, I don't see how anyone could be happy. I begin to feel as though I were living in a well-run jail. There is the same security of a bed at night, something to eat, and a few hours of "forced" recreation. But the realization that one must constantly yield to the will of a single man takes all the incentive and moral force from a human being.

I would never want you to live in such a world. I would be afraid of you when you were a grown woman, and that is the real tragedy of Germany today . . . the children.

This afternoon I met our Ambassador, Mr. Hugh Wilson. Later I went on a midnight prowl with Freddie and Dorothy. There is still a feeling of suspense—that something will happen in Berlin. We saw large groups of Storm Troopers about the city, but Freddie said they were probably ordered out to clap at some meeting.

Berlin, November 10, 1938

This morning the telephone rang at four o'clock. I could hear Freddie speaking quietly, and knowing something about the lives of newspapermen, I paid little attention to being awakened at such an early hour.

Later at breakfast I found Freddie sitting over his coffee, staring at the wall in front of him. Dorothy was still in her dressing gown. There was a frightful silence when I entered the room. I thought that someone must have died during the night.

Finally Freddie said, "Well, it has started and God only knows where it will end." When I asked what had started, he told me calmly, "Another Jewish pogrom—because of Von Rath."

Coming from a war, one's nerves are attuned to violence, and I was surprised to find myself turning to Dorothy like a scared rabbit. She seemed to accept the thing that was about to happen like a trained nurse accustomed to caring for a lunatic.

Later in the morning I drove through the city with her. Everything was quiet, and the morning was so cold and damp after an hour of this cruising around that Dorothy decided the whole

thing had been called off. I wanted to buy a Contax camera. I asked her to take me to a camera store. While I was examining the Contax I heard a splitting crash, followed by the noise of breaking glass. I started to run for the door of this shop but the salesman held my arm. He begged me not to look and said, "You are an American. I don't want you to look at this Germany—these aren't the people of my country doing this thing!"

In the furniture store across the street there was a group of young boys like our American college students. They had hatchets and crowbars in their hands and they were singing while they went about the most vicious piece of wrecking I have ever seen. They were not content just to smash an object—they methodically ground every conceivable thing to pieces; not even the walls of the store were left untouched. Long splinters of wood were left hanging like icicles. When this gang, which was comparatively small, and which any group of able-bodied men could have beaten to smithereens, had finished this store, they went singing down the street unmolested, searching out another victim.

By the time we had reached the Unter den Linden, every Jewish shop was being hacked to pieces. I was amazed at the coolness with which a wrecker would swing his ax into large plateglass windows without the slightest fear of being cut by the falling glass. These people were like cold demons. They were wild with a sadistic kind of delirium. The pavements began to look as if an earthquake had struck Berlin. Objects of every description were strewn over the pavements. But the people just stood there; their faces looked dead. No one spoke a word and the police made no attempt to stop the wrecking or the looting. . . .

I walked over to the Kurfurstendamm, which is one of the fashionable shopping streets . . . the same thing was happening there. I stood in front of one shop and watched the owner—an old Jewish man—being forced to pick up, piece by piece, the broken debris in front of his store. While he was doing this, the wreckers grabbed the only object that had not been torn to bits,

a family photograph, and hung it on a wire in front of the doorway. And then they all took turns spitting on this picture! A baby started to cry in the arms of a young woman onlooker. She scolded the baby for crying and held it high in the air to have a better look at this "national glory!"

Towards evening clouds of smoke curled over Berlin. The synagogues had been set on fire. I drove with Dorothy across the city to find the wife of a Jewish newspaperman working for the U.P. While I waited in the street I saw a man being chased by fifteen Storm Troopers. He didn't have a chance. They closed in on him like hounds after a fox. When they grabbed him he was thrown to the pavement and his skull bashed until he lay there completely unconscious. The Troopers walked calmly away, brushing off their uniforms. I stood by the car, numb with fear, and hating myself for having watched such a ghastly scene; then I realized what could happen to the hearts of men if they permitted themselves not only to indulge in such sadism, but to become passive spectators of such hideous crimes.

When one sees a child wilfully destroying an object, one is filled with indignation. But for grown people to commit such acts of violence is worse for them morally . . . they are the real victims. What I saw today is worse than war. At least in war, man has the chance to fight back.

#### On Board a Plane, November 11, 1938

I am writing this note in a plane headed back to France. Dorothy and Freddie must think I'm crazy to leave so suddenly when I had barely begun to see "Nazi Culture." I want to get home to America—at least Franco hasn't smashed through the Ebro. Perhaps there is still time for people in our country to realize what a Fascist victory will mean in Spain. And I want to get home to you—to know you are safe.

In the excitement of leaving, I forgot to turn in my marks. I have them hidden in the heel of my shoe. I don't want to add to



LEFT TO RIGHT, BACKGROUND:

*General Rojo, Chief of Staff; General Jose Miaja;  
Commissar General Osorio; General Cordon,  
Under-Secretary of War.*





*Ione Robinson with Monsieur Jean Pugibet*

**AT OPENING EXHIBITION OF SPANISH DRAWINGS, UNIVERSITY OF MEXICO**

LEFT TO RIGHT: Jorge Cuesta, Julio Castellanos, Emilio Amero, Carlos Merida, Rodolpho Usigli, Adolpho Best-Maugard, Ione Robinson and, second from right, Pablo O'Higgins. Others not identified.



my sick stomach by swallowing these pieces of paper. It seems a hundred times further flying back to France; now we are just over Cologne. . . .

On Board S.S. *Queen Mary*, November 14, 1938

I have spent most of the hours on board this ship in bed. There is no use in coming home sick, and yet I wonder how I am going to avoid it. I can find no rest because there is no sleep deep enough to close out the terrible sufferings of the people I have seen, both in Spain and in Germany. The fighting in Spain was the first sign of the unwillingness of the people to accept this so-called "New Order," designed purely and solely for the glorification of the State rather than the welfare of its people. I simply couldn't believe my eyes nor yet my ears, for that matter, when ten years ago I saw the parading of the Black Shirts and heard the shoutings of Mussolini. Now these last days in Germany have crystalized in my mind and in my heart the terrible import of what Nazism and Fascism have in store for the rest of the world.

Ernst Toller, the great German writer who has been exiled so long from his own country, is on board. He has been trying to make me see things as they are. He has suffered so much as a German and a Jew that I felt I should have some faith in what he has to say.

Last night he read aloud a manuscript he has just completed. It is a play about a pastor in a German concentration camp. Toller read the lines so beautifully. At times it seemed that I was listening to the Bible. He told me that he had tried to write into this play everything that was in his heart, and that he was certain one day this play would be produced in a new Germany.

Toller, in spite of his efforts to be philosophical, has been torn to pieces by the Spanish civil war. He has a folio filled with photographs of the starving people of the Republic, and a file of letters from important people in Europe to support a plan to ship

surplus wheat to Spain. Sometimes I feel that he is on the edge of a terrible nervous breakdown. Food for Spain has become an obsession with him. He is afraid the Spanish people will lose their Republic in the same manner that Germany lost hers. He told me that he almost pitied me. He said I had seen a star and no one would believe in the star I had seen!

## CHAPTER XXIX

New York, December 25, 1938

My dearest little girl:

It is Christmas again, a cold, gray day, but you are happy with your lighted tree and new toys. I have been back in our country only a short while, but the events that are occurring seem out of all proportion to the hours that mark off a day. One frightful calamity overlaps another.

When I returned to America from Germany, I found New York on fire over the Jewish persecutions. I was asked to speak on the radio and at meetings. I tried always to drag the fate of the Spanish people into what I said about Germany, but human beings are peculiar. One tragedy is never enough for a lesson; in listening to a fresh horror, they quickly close their minds to the past. Consequently, evil events will probably always occur in this world.

Mr. Robert Dell of the *Manchester Guardian* (an English newspaper) who is now in New York, and who was one of the speakers at a mass meeting against the Nazis at the Fulton Theater where I spoke the day after I returned from Europe, is one of the few people who sees clearly the handwriting on the wall. He said that what was happening today in Germany must be considered in relation to the history of that country in the last nine years. There have been other outrages against the Jews. Now what is happening is that Hitler is on the march to destroy whatever is left of democracy in Europe, unless we wake up. He warned the audience about a Franco victory in Spain.

Bert Lytell, Orson Welles, Raymond Massey, Robert Sherwood, and a number of other people also spoke forcefully about the German situation. I hoped with all my heart that the horrors of the last weeks in Germany would vitalize the attitude of our country into helping the Spanish Republic. But now even the Conference of Lima seems to have lost all its purpose if, in trying to create democratic Inter-American solidarity, we remain

passive and watch Spain, the mother country of these Spanish-speaking peoples, become Fascist.

Before Mr. Kennedy returned to America, he phoned me from London to ask what was going on in the States about the Jews. He felt that his plan to remove the Jews from Germany wasn't getting the right sort of publicity. He said he was working his head off trying to help the victims of Hitler, and he resented the attitude of the American press concerning his activities.

Mr. Kennedy is really too smart to be so stupid. Removing the Jews from Germany doesn't remove the core of the trouble there, which is—Hitler! If the kind of world Hitler wants succeeds, then the rest of the world's statesmen might just as well turn into "moving men," because their work will consist of simply juggling populations from one place to another!

Since Mr. Kennedy came home, he has said publicly that we must keep trying for peace at any cost, or we will have only two alternatives, both bad: economic chaos, or war!

While all this talk goes on, the battle of the Ebro continues! I gave money from my exhibition to the wounded of the Lincoln Brigade.

Ernst Toller has been coming often to see us. He spends hours in the park, walking by your carriage. His play was not accepted. He is terribly despondent.

Washington, D.C., January 12, 1939

Today I saw the Capitol for the first time. Although this trip to Washington was made primarily to arrange for the showing of the Spanish drawings, I have spent most of my time sitting in the gallery of the House of Representatives. After Europe this summer, I wanted to see our own government in action; and because this was the first time I ever listened to the representatives of the American people, I waited breathlessly, with awe in my heart, for the proceedings to begin.

The seats in the Chamber began to fill, and a gaunt, muscular, bushy-eyed man took his seat on the rostrum. He was William

B. Bankhead, the Speaker of the House. Up to that time I had thought of him only as the father of Tallulah Bankhead, a favorite actress of mine.

The session opened with a beautifully moving prayer by the chaplain. But the speeches that followed were so full of meanness and selfishness that it seemed ironical that they could have been made by men who had heard the chaplain's words.

The entire morning was spent haranguing for and against new appropriations for the W.P.A. The majority of congressmen were opposed to any more money being spent on it. One of the few exceptions was Vito Marcantonio. I had met him in New York years before. Such a strange-looking, insignificant little man! I remember that when I was introduced to him a perverse streak prompted me to ask him what had become of Cleopatra. But his talk today, although not well received by his fellow members, set me to thinking.

I had always had an idea that Marcantonio might possibly be a Communist; yet I was sympathetic with his ideas when he defended the W.P.A. workers from attacks today. He said they didn't want W.P.A. jobs—they wanted to get back into private industry, but as long as private industry failed to give them opportunities to work, it was the duty of the United States government to provide work at a decent wage, enough to support them in the American way during their period of unemployment. By the time he got through I was sick at heart that someone else, not tainted with the odor of Communism, had not said the things that he had. He alone seemed to bring a human touch into the business of government.

In contrast with the fervid words of Marcantonio was the speech of a cold, clear-thinking, Connecticut Yankee—a congressman from that state. For five minutes he spoke on the 300th anniversary of the Fundamental Orders of the people of Hartford, Windsor, and Wethersfield. This afforded him an excuse to dilate upon the dangers of the road upon which the President is leading the country. It was a variation of the same conservative hysteria that was rampant in Europe last summer.

Walking back to my hotel, I passed the statue of a great Polish hero, Kosciuszko, who helped us to win our Revolutionary War, and I thought about the Poles I had seen in Spain, and about all the other foreign Volunteers who had joined that war, and wondered where they were now.

It is because of what we have here in America that people who want to be free look towards us with such hope. They expect us to support them morally; that is why I was annoyed this evening when a newspaper woman asked me why I had gone under the bombs in Spain when I had a child like you. I told her I had to help the Spanish now, because the next time it might be my own child. But she didn't understand what I meant.

It seems terribly clear to me that if our kind of democracy is to survive in the future, we must project this faith in what we believe now far across the seas. If we don't, the peoples of Europe who want a democratic government will lose faith in us and turn to other ideologies.

Morelia, Michoacan, February 17, 1939

My darling:

Two weeks ago I arrived in Mexico. It is the first time I have returned to this country in years. How changed everything is! Mexico City has become an almost Americanized modern city.

My drawings of the women of Barcelona are hanging now in the gallery of the University of Mexico! Carlos Meirda wrote a beautiful foreword to the catalogue. At the opening of the exhibition it seemed that everyone I had ever known in Mexico was there. Diego Rivera's daughters have grown into tall, beautiful young girls. They make me feel very old. Lupe Marin, their mother, is as beautiful and fiery as she was years ago. Orozco is smiling for the first time in his life. He is very successful.

I would tell you more about the painters, but I'm writing to you from the Plaza of the city of Morelia, and I want to tell you what I'm doing here. I came to make photographs of the Spanish children in the *Escuela Mexico-España*.

Most of the children in this school are war orphans, although there are some who still have living parents fighting for the Republic. The building in which they are living is an old Spanish Colonial convent, and as the country in this part of Mexico is similar to that of northern Spain, they do not look like "refugees." It was not until I looked into their eyes and stroked their closely cropped heads and saw how they sat with arms tightly folded and head bent low, as though they were afraid to look into the sky, that I realized the stigma of war was still upon them.

The Mexican government has placed a certain number of Mexican children in this school to help rehabilitate these little Spaniards into a normal life. But they are still afraid of everyone. It is a moving sight to see the Mexican children trying to give confidence to these descendants of the Conquistadors, to adapt themselves to their "own civilization" once again, as many of them have become wilder than any Aztec savage!

When I asked one little boy with an artificial hand where he came from, he threw his head proudly in the air and said, "*Yo soy de Madrid!*" (I am from Madrid!). And then, jumping up and down, he asked me if I had come by plane from Madrid, and begged for news from his country. That is what breaks my heart today—for the Republic is falling!

When the Franco troops entered Barcelona I was sitting in the Alameda Park in Mexico City with Luis Monasterio, the sculptor. The week before I had read the headlines describing the fall of the Ebro, but I could never bring myself to buy a paper. The headlines were enough to make me realize what was happening. But the day Barcelona fell, I read to the bitter end the description of the occupation of that city. I will never believe that the Insurgents entered in "glory," cheered by a rejoicing population! I simply cannot believe that, because I lived with the people of Barcelona. Monasterio tried to console me by saying that force is a power that can be conquered only by force.

Seeing these children of the Republic, high in the mountains of Michoacan, I still cannot believe that Spain has been con-



quered by the Fascists. These children, like those living in Spain, will grow up in the shadow of their fathers' faith. I told you before that wars for freedom are never lost, that they go on repeating themselves until they are won. The dream of the Republic will never leave these children because their fathers were possessed by it.

It is strange how cowards gain confidence through the misery of others. The Franco sympathizers in Mexico are coming out into the open, now that Barcelona has fallen. Newspapers have changed overnight; there are dozens of editorials praising the German, Italian, Moorish offensive through Catalonia. What is worse, certain friends of mine in Mexico openly praise Hitler! Enrique Correa, whom I have adored for years, told me that soon Berlin was going to be the capital of the world! And there is a very clever editor of the most widely circulated magazine in Mexico who came to see me, wearing a swastika pin in his buttonhole! He actually tried to "make me sympathetic" towards the Germans. I just sat and looked at him without answering. I didn't throw him out, because I was too curious to hear him out. When he picked up his briefcase to go, he said that I was a very stupid woman, that he could waste no more time—on me!

The German Embassy in Mexico is like the "house of the open door" . . . and all over the streets one can read German propaganda, pasted on the sides of buildings. Street vendors sell Nazi pins and swastika flags, and the radio is monopolized by pro-Nazi programs. Mexico City certainly has changed. It looks Americanized on the surface, with "quick lunch" counters and soda fountains, but under the surface the Germans are digging a sinister foundation for things bigger than soda fountains!

Before I came here to Morelia, I met Señor Indelico Prieto, the former Spanish finance minister, whom many Republicans accused of having wanted to make a negotiated peace with Franco last year. Prieto sat in his suite at the Hotel Reforma, looking like a sleeping Buddha. He did not seem a bit upset over the fall of Barcelona. He said that the Communists had ruined

the Republic, forcing its leaders to resist when there was never any hope of the tide turning in their favor for a final victory.

I had heard much about Prieto, of his brilliant mind, his keen perception, and I had heard of the many things he had done in the overthrow of the Monarchy and the founding of the Republic. Even Ernst Toller had spoken to me about him on the *Queen Mary*, and had said that he is one of the great men of Spain.

To hear Prieto speak the way he did was a rude shock. I had expected to find him broken by the turn of events, instead of which he was calm and unperturbed. He might have been speaking about the fall of Rome instead of Barcelona!

What a difference between this man and Negrin, who has just left for Madrid—which is still in the hands of the Loyalists. Perhaps Madrid will prove another Cadiz. For four years that city withstood Napoleon, and then became the rallying point for the armies which drove out the would-be conqueror.

Mexico City, February 28, 1939

My darling:

This afternoon, in the Gallery, I stood looking at the people I had drawn a few months ago. Where are they now? I have been thinking of Laura, her son, Clotilde, her tiny baby, and the old man who was always sitting on his box. I know they were not among those who greeted the Moors with cheers.

I have been thinking, too, about Lady Keyes. I wonder if she feels "secure" tonight with the Duke of Alba installed in the Spanish Embassy in London. I read that the English recognized Franco, before the House of Commons had time publicly to announce the voting returns!

Yesterday afternoon I was out riding with Mr. Pugibet. We rode and rode without speaking, until suddenly he checked his horse. He pulled at a chain around his neck, snapping off two small golden medals, and in great desperation he gave them to me, saying that they were his most precious possession. He told

me these medals belonged to the nun Vasouis (a great-aunt of his) who had been the teacher of Bernadette Soubirous.

I didn't want to take the medals, and I didn't know what to do, because he was crying. He said I had taught him what it was really to love, and when I asked him to explain more clearly, he told me that he wished he could love people as I loved the Spanish people.

## CHAPTER XXX

Paris, March 12, 1939

When we left New York for London ten days ago, Condé Nast had given me a letter to the editor of the London *Vogue*. I had intended to work in London, but when I flew over to Paris to arrange some matters with my bank, I found a number of letters which impressed me so deeply that I returned to London and brought you and Margit back to Paris.

Mr. Bertrand Cruger, who had been helping us to find a flat in London, could not understand why I had changed my plans so suddenly. If I had taken the time to begin from the beginning and told him all that was in my heart, I think he would understand.

A few days ago I went to see Lawrence Higgins, the first secretary in the American Embassy (who is married to my old friend, Elizabeth Jenkins, from Mexico City). He not only told me about the frightful exodus of the Spanish Republicans over the Pyrenees into France, but from him I learned that Dr. Negrin and members of his government had fled from Madrid. During the last days a bloody rebellion broke out in Madrid, launched by a Colonel Casado and General Miaja.

Late this afternoon I received word that Osorio-Tafall was in Paris. I hardly recognized him when he came to see me. His civilian clothes were unpressed and his face looked haggard and worn; his eyes were the eyes of a man almost at the end of all physical and mental endurance.

When I told him about the letters I had received from some of the people I had known in Barcelona, now prisoners in the concentration camps in the south of France, he held his head in his hands and asked me not to show them to him . . . because he had seen the frightful misery of these people. But he added that what was happening in Madrid was even worse. The treachery of Casado was inducing men who had fought for a common cause to kill one another!

I want to copy for you some of the letters I found awaiting me in the bank, which brought about my change of plans.

One from Argelés, dated February 12, 1939, read:

"Distinguished and appreciated Miss Robinson: You will no doubt be astonished at these lines, because I cannot consider myself happy enough to be remembered by you. I have some hope . . . In the days that you spent in Barcelona, you will perhaps remember the son of the chauffeur who drove you to the munitions factories. When I went to the front at Ebro, I sent you a postcard, and I still have your answer with me now. I am Enrique Borrás.

"Since the Republican Army of Catalonia withdrew, I have been in a French concentration camp. I address myself to you because that is my only possible hope to get out of this prison, where I have been confined for several weeks.

"Miss Robinson, in your hands lies the freedom of a young Spaniard who desires to live life with his head high and to fight for a free life in France, England, or wherever it may be necessary. I ask you for what a man loves most in his life: I beg for freedom. I have never liked to ask for things, but circumstances make it necessary to ask you to help me.

"Spain, my country, remains far behind. I am ready to go wherever I am needed now. Anxiety and illusion have their hold on me now . . ."

And here is one, dated February 15, 1939, at St. Cyprien, from Major F. R. Escrig Gonzalvo, Chief of the 87th Division:

"Long live the Republic! Dear friend, I had the honor of meeting you in my country some months ago. One day I remember that you came to Tarragona, to a country house where the 87th Brigade had its headquarters. We visited a *Capacitation* school of that Brigade, where we watched the pupils marching. Afterwards we traveled through the country along the waterfront.

"Today, after spending many weeks in this concentration camp in France, I am again on the shores of the sea. But what a difference, my friend. At the beach of *Perelles*, where we talked about the beautiful Mediterranean and the magnificent Spanish country, rich

and proud of its incomparable panoramas, we talked about my projects when the people would have won a victory over its enemy, and about the splendid future of Spain . . . France, which I surely don't hate, puts another Mediterranean beach in front of us, where we lack not only the elementary comforts, but even the most necessary things to be able to live. No room, not even the slightest freedom outside on the beach. A ration inferior to what Spain gave to her soldiers. Terrible weather; the wind brings heavy clouds of sand, and we have abundant rain and cold. Solitude, no books, magazines, or even newspapers. We may only read the French reactionary press. Dear friend, we are without country, without home. We are prisoners, we are called 'undesirables.'

"But we don't lose courage or hope. The day will come when we shall push out of Spain all those who today make her suffer and weep. I am proud to be a Spaniard and especially to have commanded my countrymen in battle. I am proud of my three wounds and of my present days interned in a concentration camp! One day France and the whole world will open their eyes, and do us justice. I know that the people of France are not the present oppressing government. If I hear from you I will explain many things to you. Meanwhile I send you my best greetings and gratitude. I don't forget your spiritual and material collaboration to the cause of my unhappy people."

And here, the most poignant of all, undated—from my friends of the *refugiol*

"Dear friend, We like to think of you in good health, and together with your child. There is no news about us. These few words, 'these four letters' (Spanish expression) are to tell you that we must write to you about the situation we are in. You will know that since Barcelona fell we have been evacuated to France. If Franco triumphs, we do not want to go back to Spain. If you know of any country that claims refugees, we are willing to go anywhere, except to Franco Spain.

"Friend, I think that you will know who the family is who asks this favor of you. We are the Asturian family who appreciated you so much in the refuge where you worked in Barcelona. We hope

that you will not forget this favor we ask of you, and we thank you beforehand. We send many greetings, to you and your child, from this family who appreciate you sincerely,

Laura, and Clotilde Lopez and  
three more of the family."

I don't think anyone who had seen the struggle of the Spanish people in Spain could read these letters and coldly put them aside. And because I have part of your beautiful grandmother in me (who was always helping unfortunates) I want to do the things for these people which I know she would have done for them.

## CHAPTER XXXI

Paris, March 15, 1939

This morning we drove across the city to see Sanchez-Ventura and his wife, who are living in the apartment of the daughter of Elie Faure, the critic; then I left you with Margit to play in the Luxembourg Gardens, while I drove to the Gare d'Orléans with the Venturas.

We stood on the platform waiting for the morning train to arrive from Perpignan. Among the passengers the Venturas recognized friends who had managed to flee from the south and the concentration camps. As old friends met, they tried to show no outward emotion; there was no embracing. These new Spanish arrivals in Paris looked like hunted men. Now they were not fleeing from Franco's bombs: they were running from the French officials, who were watching sharply to arrest the refugees without proper papers.

The Café Neapolitan on the Boulevard des Italiens has become, unknown to the proprietor, the unofficial meeting place for the Spaniards. Late this afternoon I went there with Osorio-Tafall, and I met the tall and handsome Hidalgo de Cisneros, head of the Loyalist Air Force (and the husband of Constanca de la Mora). Also I met General Cordon, who signed my pass to cross the Ebro. Cordon is now Under Secretary of War, and even though he was sitting in the Café Neapolitan on the Boulevard des Italiens, he still regards himself as that!

From hour to hour these people wait for news from Madrid. General de Cisneros said that he had been one of the last people to talk with Casado, before this man treacherously betrayed Negrin two weeks ago. He said that Casado had told him Franco would negotiate a fair peace, without reprisals, with the high ranking officers of the Republic, but not with Negrin. Cisneros said that he told Casado he was foolish to believe such promises, but at the time he never imagined Casado could be plotting a *coup d'état* . . . if he had, he would have shot him on the spot.

The part General Miaja (the former defender of Madrid) is



playing in this treachery enraged these people tonight, when they spoke about the exchange of Miaja's son by Franco for Miguel Primo de Rivera.

Paris, March 26, 1939

This evening, when we had just finished dinner, the radio announced the surrender of Madrid.

Sanchez-Ventura and his wife sat motionless—their grief was the kind of grief that is beyond all sorrow. They didn't even wait to hear the end of the broadcast. I followed them out into the hall to the elevator, and after I had pushed the button, they left me standing by the shaft, and walked down the stairs. I knew there was nothing I could say. . . .

What has happened is more than a million mortal deaths (which is the reality in this war). What has happened is beyond all that, because Madrid was a symbol, not only for Spaniards, but for all men with principles throughout a world that is dividing itself.

I held your little hand for a long time—sitting by your bed in the darkness—after they had gone away.

Paris, March 31, 1939

Tomorrow we are moving from this hotel. During the last days I have been driving back and forth to Chantilly, arranging the house I have sublet there from Pierre Colle.

This evening I went to an address on the rue St. Lazare to meet Osorio-Tafall, who said that he had something important to ask me. When the taxi dropped me in front of a large cobblestone courtyard on this street, the building in the rear looked so broken down and ramshackle that I could not imagine why I was asked to come to such a place. The elevator had stopped working. I walked up a long, winding, wooden stairway until I came to the room number of my card.

When the door opened I saw a bare room, with a single desk

in the center of the floor. Behind the desk sat a young man, with a khaki military shirt under his civilian coat. The room was crowded with Spaniards, who looked like men waiting to be "employed."

This young man took me into an adjoining office, which was just as bare. Osorio was sitting in the corner of the room facing the door, talking to a tall man with a serious face. While they were speaking, I looked about the room. On the window sill I saw a stocky man sitting, swinging his legs in the air like a schoolboy. His suit was so tight that the buttons were almost popping off, and his blue woolen beret was pulled down close to his eyebrows. When he looked up I recognized the "stonemason," Colonel Lister.

After I had greeted Lister, he whispered to me not to ask him any questions, because he "couldn't talk . . . except," he smiled, about "women and bulls!"

When Osorio had finished his conversation with the tall man, he introduced me to Señor Ascarate, the Republican Ambassador to Great Britain. Shortly afterwards Osorio and I left the building and drove over to a café on the Place Clichy.

Osorio asked me what I was planning to do in France. I told him that I had taken a house in the country, and I hoped to make drawings for the *Paris Vogue*. He said he thought I could do something more interesting than that with the refugees in the south of France.

He said that the office I had just come from was going to be the headquarters of the S.E.R.E. (*Servicio de Emigracion para Republicanos*) of which he was to be a director, with Ambassador Ascarate, and explained that this was an organization under Dr. Negrin to rehabilitate the Spanish Republicans in other countries. He thought that this was the only hope for them at present, as none could return to Spain. Franco was executing Loyalists by the hundreds every day, and prisons were overflowing.

Osorio told me that the conditions in the concentration camps were deplorable—that the French were bitter and hostile towards

the Republicans. When I asked him where Lister was going, he said to Russia; but few Spaniards would be able to go there as refugees, because the Russians didn't feel it was their responsibility alone to look after the defeated Republicans. If she started to look after them, other countries would not feel obliged to do so.

Osorio was optimistic about the plan to send some of the Spaniards to Mexico. There are about a hundred thousand in the camps. Already Mexico had promised to take thirty thousand; half of the number would consist of agricultural workers, while the remaining half were to be skilled workers, doctors, lawyers, etc. If all went according to plan, the first refugee ship (sponsored by the Scottish Duchess of Atholl and the British Commission to Aid Spain) would sail from a southern port for Vera Cruz around the end of May.

When I asked what he wanted me to do, he looked at me intently, as though he wanted me to agree before disclosing what was in his mind. I have never met anyone as serious as this man. He rarely laughs. His energy is amazing. When speaking, he has an unconscious manner of making everyday events fit into a systematic historical record. He is never pessimistic, but keeps referring to an "inevitable direction" in world events. The fact that Franco has taken over Spain does not stop him from referring to the Republic as though it were the acting government.

He told me that the French would not permit any high ranking Republican officials in the camps; that it was impossible to find out anything about the prisoners, or what condition they were in; that it was necessary to find out all this before selecting prisoners for the S.E.R.E., which was going to try to concentrate on people who would fit into the immigration plan of the Mexican government.

Knowing that I was anxious to make some drawings of these prisoners, he looked at me with a wink and asked, "How would you like to do some sketching in the camps?" Then, lowering his voice, he suggested that I go to Perpignan with a French Colonel

Monnier (who was a sort of liaison officer between the Republican and French officials) and while sketching I could find out the state of the prisoners, what they urgently needed, and a general idea of what they represented.

Perpignan, May 3, 1939

My dearest little girl:

This morning when I arrived in Perpignan with Colonel Monnier, we drove straight to the same old Grand Hotel, where we met Señor Ramon Viguri, a deputy of the Spanish Cortez who seems to be the only Spanish official who has been in the camps.

Señor Viguri looked very diplomatic in a gray suit and gray Homberg hat, but his face was gaunt and anxious. As he talked to Monnier, he jerked and pulled at his tie. He seemed on the verge of losing whatever composure he had left.

I registered at the desk, and went upstairs to leave my luggage. When I came down into the lobby, there was another very young French officer talking with Monnier and Viguri. Colonel Monnier introduced me to Lieutenant Pratt, who spoke excellent Spanish. When I asked the lieutenant where he had learned Spanish, he told me he had been a teacher of French in the University of Madrid.

From the Grand Hotel we walked over to the Prefecture of Police. Viguri and I waited for nearly two hours in the dark reception room. Monnier and Pratt were talking with *le préfet* all this time, and Viguri didn't like it.

Finally they came out of the office, smiling, and we were taken in to meet M. Didkowski, *le préfet*, a small man with a thin mustache and the rosette of the Legion of Honor. He asked to see our passports, and then wrote out permission for us to visit Argelés.

We drove away from Perpignan in one of the confiscated cars of the Republic which still had the red star Army insignia painted on the doors. The drive to Argelés took about half an

hour. As we drove towards the sea, it started to rain. The wind was bitter cold, and blew the sand hard against the windshield.

Before I saw the Mediterranean, I saw the remnants of the Spanish Republic. There were thousands of khaki-colored forms scattered over the sand. Holding nondescript coverings over their heads in an effort to keep dry, they looked like a mass of pup-tents.

The road leading to the first patrol box was heavily guarded by Senegalese troops. We must have passed a dozen patrol boxes before we reached the officer in command of Argelés. Monnier had quite a time with him. He didn't want us to enter the camp, and he was mad with *le préfet* for giving us passes. He said the prisoners were under the jurisdiction of the French Army, and that he would let no one enter without a pass from the general staff in Paris.

Señor Viguri seemed almost relieved. It was obvious he did not want to face the prisoners again. But somehow, Monnier got around this Colonel, and persuaded him to let us by. In another five minutes we were driving across the sand towards a low wooden barrack marked with the sign: "*Estado Major*."

Before we reached the barbed-wire barrier in front of the *Estado Major*, a tall Spanish officer walked towards the entrance to greet us. He had the rank of a colonel, and he must have been about fifty-five years old. He was wrapped in one of the great blanket-like capes that I saw on some of the soldiers on the Ebro.

Viguri embraced him in the Spanish manner, throwing his arms about his shoulders, and then he introduced Colonel Ascarte to us. He took us into the *Estado Major*, a low room with a single wooden table in the middle, two benches, and a kerosene lamp.

There were about a dozen Republican officers standing around the room. Their uniforms were ragged, their faces unshaven.

Finally Ascarte broke the silence. He asked where Negrin and Del Vayo were, and he asked after Miaja. Viguri told them about Negrin forming the S.E.R.E. He told them Negrin was

making every effort to dissolve the concentration camps, with the aid of the British, French, Mexicans, and several South American countries, before the summer ended. Placing a stack of yellow cards in the center of the table, he explained how they were to be filled out—according to one's political party. This set off a heated discussion. Every Republican officer resented his fate as a prisoner and the possibility of emigration from France, to be catalogued through a political party. They had no confidence there would be an equal choice. Finally an engineer named Picasso lost his self-control. He shouted for Negrin to face the prisoners—he blamed the disaster of the retreat of Catalonia on the Premier. Finally one elderly colonel managed to restore some order in the room. He said that all soldiers must know, if they are beaten in battle, that they must face the consequences of the vanquished. The engineer said that he would not consider himself a prisoner of the French—that he would prefer to die a prisoner of Franco and the Fascists than to be a prisoner of Franco's accomplice.

At this point Lieutenant Pratt took me outside. We walked for nearly an hour over the sands of Argelès. There were barracks under construction, but they will not be completed for at least two more weeks. I saw makeshift tents of every description, but the great mass of the Republican soldiers were without shelter of any sort. They lay closely together on the sand, looking in the direction of the Pyrenees. I could not bring myself to look into their eyes.

Perpignan, May 7, 1939

My dearest little girl:

Every morning at eight-thirty Lieutenant Pratt drives by the Grand Hotel to pick me up and take me with him into the concentration camp of Argelès. The officers in the *Estado Major* wait anxiously each day for him to arrive, and so do the prisoners. They think he is going to be able to do something to get them out of this place. He is the only French officer they trust

and regard as their friend. Pratt loves Spain. The sight of the camp torments him.

When we cross through the barbed wire into the *Estado Major*, Colonels Muro and Ascarte are always the first to greet us, and then we go into the barrack where they are confined. These two men were formerly Monarchist officers, and among the few who remained loyal to the Republic.

Every morning these officers ask the same questions, over and over again. Pratt lets them talk their hearts out. He told me that was all that he could do.

The only thing to break the monotony of the day in this camp is the hour when food is rationed out. The rest of the time the prisoners just lie on the sand, staring towards the Pyrenees. They are completely demoralized.

Rumors of the ship that will sail for Mexico has spread throughout the camp. Everyone expects to be on that one ship—each one is certain that he will be among the lucky ones to sail. And yet they know this is impossible. They look at one another like men condemned to death.

I have been drawing, in the *Estado Major*, Muro, Ascarte, a young poet named Cielo, and a group of other prisoners whom Ascarte brought into this barrack. Pratt knows a great deal about painting. While I'm drawing he talks of Renoir, Degas, Matisse, and his close friend, the sculptor, Aristide Maillol. Pratt and Maillol were born in the village of Marly-le-Roi, which lies about twenty miles along the coast in the direction of Spain. When Pratt told me this, I understood his love for the Spaniards, as the French who are natives of this part of France are in a sense half-Spanish.

Every day I can see long lines of prisoners being transferred to other camps. They tie together whatever they have left of their possessions, and are driven away by the French in the confiscated trucks of the Spanish Republic.

There is an immense "graveyard" of Republican cars of every make and description on the outskirts of the camp. I saw dozens of ambulances which had been sent to Spain by many foreign

countries shot through with machine-gun bullets which had been fired at them from the low-flying Franco planes during the retreat into France.

There are a few British women here who have been trying to distribute medical supplies, chocolate bars, soap, and cigarettes. They are the only "outsiders" I have seen.

Perpignan, May 9, 1939

My dear little girl:

Yesterday Hamilton Fish Armstrong, the editor of *Foreign Affairs*, arrived in Perpignan. I had received a telegram from him last week, sent from the *Normandie*, asking me to have dinner when he arrived in Paris. When I received this forwarded telegram, it made me laugh, considering the place I'm working in. When I sent a reply that I was in the concentration camp of Argeles, Mr. Armstrong thought (he told me today) that I had been "locked up."

The Paris Express reaches Perpignan around eight in the morning. As it pulled in yesterday, and even though I had gone to the station to meet him, I was still surprised to see "Ham" alighting from the train—fresh and smiling. He looked like someone from another world in his smartly tailored suit.

Before we were driven to the hotel, Mr. Armstrong wanted to drive right on into the camps. I told him it was not going to be as easy as all that. If Colonel Monnier had not been in Perpignan, I am certain he would still be waiting. Monnier is a very mysterious colonel; he seems to be able to "fix" everything.

At *le préfet de police*, I noticed M. Didkowski looking with approval at Mr. Armstrong because he was wearing the rosette of the French Legion of Honor. I think that *le préfet* thought that perhaps Mr. Armstrong had come from Washington to help the French solve their problem of spending 6,000,000 francs a day in housing and feeding the Spaniards.

Monnier, Pratt, and Viguri drove with us into Argeles. The Spanish colonels were surprised to see an American diplomat



coming to visit them. It was the first time that I had seen them smiling.

All morning we walked up and down the sandy beach and through barracks that were being constructed. Mr. Armstrong was silent. I knew that he was shocked and bewildered with all that he saw.

In the afternoon we went through Barcares. Approaching this camp, I thought that the plight of the prisoners would be better than those confined at Argelès. This camp looked like a small town, with its rows and rows of newly constructed barracks. No prisoners were seen lying out in the open. But I will never forget as long as I live the shock of walking through the barracks of Barcares. The prisoners were lying in bunks, built like tiers and covered with straw. I couldn't focus my eyes on any one particular man. I didn't have the courage. Most of them were wounded. It was something out of Dante's *Inferno*—the concentration camp at Barcares.

Even though most of the prisoners at Argeles were out in the open, they had the shining blue strip of Mediterranean—and the mountains—to distract them from their misery.

We climbed the tall watch tower at Barcares and stood under a waving French flag, looking down over the camp. The sun beat hard on the tar roofs. The narrow sandy strips separating each row of buildings looked like streets—but there was not a soul, not a sign of life on these sandy strips.

Armstrong said it was foolish for the French to keep the able-bodied, well-trained soldiers of the Republic rotting away in such camps. He thought the French ought to form them into a Spanish Legion, under French officers, for the French Army. He felt this would not only be a useful force for France, in case Europe is plunged into war—but it would give the prisoners renewed morale.

While he was talking, I looked at Viguri's worried face, and then I looked at Monnier. I knew exactly what they were both thinking. Viguri knew in his heart how the interned Spaniards hated the French. They felt they had been betrayed by them,

not only in their war. Even now, when they were defeated, they were still imprisoned like criminals.

I knew that Monnier was sympathetic with the Spaniards, but he knew that by and large the French officers were all more or less like the colonel in command at Argelès who stood, whip in hand, not wanting the inmates of the camp to be able to tell their stories to any visitors. Back of this attitude on the part of these Frenchmen was the old Fascist bugaboo: an insane fear of Communism. They branded the soldiers of the Spanish Republic as "Reds."

I feel that, if a Spanish Legion under French officers is to be formed, it must be formed at once. These men, no matter how strong, will not be able to withstand the suffering they are now undergoing much longer.

Perpignan, May 15, 1939

I expect to finish my work here by next week, and I will be glad to come home to Chantilly. Somehow I have managed to make about twenty drawings, besides taking dozens of photographs (which is forbidden).

Mr. Armstrong returned to Paris the day after his tour of the camps. Before he went, I drove over to Carcassone with him. We sat in the Place Carnot of the lower town, before starting the long walk up the hill to the *Cité*. While resting in the Place Carnot I bought some violets from two little girls dressed in black smocks. They were a picture, with their yellow baskets filled with deep purple violets. But later on, while climbing up and down the high walls of the *Cité*, I lost the violets.

Since this historical town played such an important part during the Crusades, I wonder what will happen to this world in the next centuries. You can't help thinking about these things, after you see the torture chambers of the *Cité*. After all, the Crusades represented a religious and moral force in the world at that time, and yet those holy Crusaders certainly thought up terrible methods of torturing their enemies. I saw an iron grill

the size of a bed where victims were chained, while hot coals burnt them alive! And then there was a round opening where people were thrown into darkness hundreds of feet below the earth. My excursion to the *Cité* of Carcassone was not much of a rest, after the concentration camps!

I have had an experience with a young French officer these last days that has set off my imagination, and because this officer is near my own age, I'm beginning to wonder about the everyday happenings in France this summer.

I met him through a young girl who works in the Prefet's office. She invited me to have dinner one evening with a "friend." We were all to meet at a small café in front of *La Loge* (the market place) in Perpignan. Mlle. Toussaint was so late that I was almost on the point of leaving, when I saw her running down the crowded arcade of *La Loge*, looking pale and worried. She told me hurriedly that I would have to go to dinner alone with her friend, as her mother had suddenly become very ill. Her friend arrived, a M. Brenner, tall and blond, and dressed in English tweeds.

He drove me in his car along the Mediterranean, until we came to the small village of Port Vendres. The sun was just beginning to set when we drove into the harbor, and I asked him to stop for a moment near the breakwater that runs alongside the old Spanish-Moorish fort of Coullare. We walked far out on the breakwater and looked back towards the land. The Fort was glowing like an opal against the sea in the setting sun.

M. Brenner said, "Do you know, Mademoiselle, that there are many Spaniards in the Fort?"

When I asked why, he told me they were being kept there for hospitalization; when I asked why they had not been sent on to regular hospitals, he didn't seem to know, and became very irritated about the refugees in general.

We drove on up the grade of the mountain on the far side of Port Vendres and had dinner in a small café, built on one of the cliffs overlooking the sea. The wind was blowing so hard that I thought we would be blown from the cliff into the water. While

we waited for our dinner M. Brenner asked me to show him my passport—just in fun. I gave him the passport, and then I noticed he turned the pages very fast, looking at my visa stamps. Then he said, "You must like to fly a lot." When I asked him how he knew he answered, smiling, "I can tell by the customs stamps from the airfields where you have landed."

At the time I thought it strange that a civilian should notice such stamps in my passport, but I did not attach much importance to it until the following night, when I was again invited to dine at M. Brenner's house in Perpignan. I had expected a family dinner, but found myself the only guest in his small house on a street back of the station. Over the doorway through which I entered were long strands of beads, which hung like a curtain to the floor. They reminded me of the mestizo houses of Vera Cruz in Mexico. The weather has not been hot here, and it is hard to believe this a semitropical land. It is only when the wind blows hard from the Mediterranean that one remembers that Africa lies just overnight across the sea.

After M. Brenner had seated me comfortably in the drawing room, he excused himself and left me alone for some minutes. I looked carelessly at the books along a shelf, and noticed that there was hardly a French volume. The shelf was filled with Italian and German paper-bound volumes. I pulled out an Italian volume and found it to be a military report on the Invasion of Ethiopia. There were many photographs, some showing the Italians with their field equipment; the rest were photos of the badly armed frightened natives.

When M. Brenner came in to announce dinner, he took this book from my hand and put it carefully back on the shelf. During dinner he told me that he wanted me to know who he really was. He explained his identity by showing me his own passport, which bore another name with the rank of a lieutenant in the French Army. He told me about the section of France where he was born: Alsace-Lorraine; he described his numerous trips across the Rhine into Germany for the French government. He said, even though he hated the Germans, he admired what

National Socialism had done for the people of Germany; that while he could not agree on all points of National Socialism, he thought that fundamentally the German people were in some ways better off than the people of his country, who were being confused by the Communists. He said Russia was the real menace to the world today, and that the Ethiopians would progress faster under the guiding hand of Mussolini because the Italians would give them a real civilization.

In England I have met many older people who feel this way, but I didn't like to hear a young Frenchman saying these things. Being of his generation, I know that we are living in two different worlds, and if one becomes just mildly mad now, what is going to happen later on? This lieutenant has the same ideologies as the people of his age who fought for a Franco victory in Spain.

Perpignan, May 23, 1939

I'm writing to you from the open-air pavilion of Perpignan. It is Saturday afternoon. There's a band playing; people are drinking apéritifs and children are eating dishes of ice cream.

I have been sitting here thinking back over the events that have happened since we arrived in Europe this spring. One of the most shocking happened last night. Over the radio I heard that Ernst Toller had hanged himself in New York yesterday.

I can almost understand why he did this dreadful thing, and I said to myself, perhaps if I had been there, he wouldn't have become so despondent. This is no doubt what all of his friends are feeling today. I'm sure that none of us realized how desperate he was, although on the *Queen Mary* I sensed it. And during those long walks in Central Park, Ernst would look at you and smile with a forced gaiety. I knew that he wasn't happy, but I never realized he was desperate.

When his play was not accepted, Toller lost whatever spirit he had. He had put so much of himself into that play. He had come to the end of trying to recreate anything out of the suffer-

ing of this world. The struggle of the people in Spain had given him new hope. Even though he was afraid Spain would end up like his own country, he always considered that war as a ray of light for Europe. His death was a self-recognition of defeat in the face of all that he despised and hated, and in dying he has cheated, in a sense, those of us who must live on to face the increasing madness of our time.

I have learned, too, this spring, that a concentration camp is the most efficient way of destroying a human being. It seems much worse than the torture chambers at the Cité at Carcassonne. In a concentration camp one just stares into the earth or looks into the sky until he rots away, like a plant that is imbedded in a soil that has no life-giving elements.

Hitler keeps repeating to the German people that Germany is being encircled. When I look out of this pavilion towards the Pyrenees I wonder what the French think about their Spanish neighbors. To the back of the pavilion lies Italy; the people who might have been good neighbors to the French, the Spanish Republicans, lie in the sands of Argeles, surrounded by barbed wire!

The other day I found, quite by chance, the young Enrique Borrás—the boy who wrote me, and the son of the man who drove me to the munitions factories. He had been interned with a small group of wounded in a camp for women that had been built under the pine trees on the very spot where our American soldiers landed in the World War. An old Gypsy from Altimira had been posted guard at the sentry box of the entrance. Before I entered the camp the Gypsy said, "Señorita, I can't figure out why everybody is so unhappy. This is the first time in my life I don't have to steal for a living. The French give us everything, and I am a *persona* like the rest of them."

I found Enrique leaning against the barbed wire, looking towards the mountains, as so many do when they are dreaming of running away. When he saw me he cried like a baby. He thought I had arranged for him to sail on the *Siania*. This evening I did try again to get him aboard this first refugee ship, but

I failed. In spite of the wonderful generosity of the British Commission, there has been an awful lot of "card-changing" going on under the noses of the British by a young American Communist woman who is married to a Mexican connected unofficially with the Mexican Embassy in Paris. The British General, Molesworth, told me he was fed up with the whole thing, because of this one woman's interference. The day the ship sailed, both the General and the Duchess of Atholl looked as if they would not survive their journey back to England. This small Scottish noblewoman will never be forgotten by the Spaniards. It seems ironical that after all it was the English (the liberal English) who sent these first political refugees from Spain on their long voyage to the "New World."

Now that this first ship has gone, I don't have the heart to go back tomorrow into the camps, because most of those people, in spite of their chance to emigrate to South American countries, want to go home. They want to go back to Spain with such a longing that you realize profoundly that in giving up their country and becoming a vanquished people, they are among the very few who have any real convictions in this world of today.

## CHAPTER XXXII

Chantilly, June 11, 1939

Today is a beautiful Sunday in Chantilly. This morning I took you for a long walk into the forest by the road that runs in front of the big Chateau. Before we started into the shady green of the trees, I let you feed the carp in the Chateau moat. The natives of this village say that these carp are hundreds of years old. However old they are, they have the most grotesque heads I have ever seen on fishes. They look like the heads of the people by the German painter, Bosh.

Our house is the most beautiful home we have ever had. I wish that you were older, and then you would know how lovely it really is. The rooms are large, with open fireplaces and mirrors. I have spent long hours sewing curtains and searching every village and antique shop around this countryside for furniture.

The drawing room is the most completed room in the house. The other day when the upholstery man brought the deep red rug, it made this room simply glow, with its rows of books beside the fireplace and the high windows that open out onto the garden.

Our dining room is so pleasant that one always feels like spending hours at the round cherry table. I mixed the blue for the walls with such an assortment of colors that the painter impatiently swore the walls would never be blue. The simple white curtains, with their narrow ruffles, catch the shadows from the ivy growing over the walls of the house. When it is moonlight I can look from my bedroom windows down into the garden and across the wall towards the tower of the Chateau, and can see the moon reflected in the water of the moat. Each hour is marked off by the deep musical bell of the Chateau.

Margit hates the house because it is old and reminds her of her "peasant" days in Brittany. Now that she has become thoroughly Americanized, she cannot see anything beautiful in the ancient houses of her country. Because the plumbing in our "Chateau" is very ancient and a grumbling noise shakes the



house every time we turn on the water, Margit throws her arms into the air and screams that she wants to go home.

This afternoon at tea-time we listened to the radio news from America. The British King and Queen have charmed the American people, just as they charmed the French last summer. When I'm an old lady I think I'll always remember how the English Queen looked during these first years of her reign. She has one of the most beautifully kind faces, and she seems, from her photographs, even lovelier this summer in America.

In the last ten days, the Germans and Italians have been welcoming home their volunteers from Spain. In Germany, Goering said, as he pinned diamond-studded medals on the "heroes" from Spain, that the Rome-Berlin Axis had won the Spanish war. He added, too, that all the recipients of decorations in Germany would be formed into a new air defense regiment, which will be called "Condor."

Hitler told the German people during the celebration that he had sent armed assistance to Franco merely to repay an old German debt to Spain for her neutrality in the World War. Well, at last he has admitted they were there!

I am working again, very hard. I expect to have an exhibition this fall at Pierre Colle's gallery.

Chantilly, June 19, 1939

Señor Ventura and his wife have been spending a few days with us. I have tried to make Maruja take a good rest because she is going to have a baby. Yesterday at lunch she became so upset over the conversation of little Joe Kennedy that Margit had to put her to bed.

Joe, who had just flown over from London and who recently returned from Spain, is full of his Spanish adventures. He says he is writing them all down for a *Saturday Evening Post* article. He was sympathetic towards the *coup d'état* provoked by Colonel Casado against the Negrin government, and he spoke so openly about his helping Casado to establish himself in exile



PHOTOGRAPHS BY IONE ROBINSON

*Boy from Madrid, Escuela Mexico-España Morelia, Mexico*

*Spanish Children, Escuela Mexico-España Morelia, Mexico*





PHOTOGRAPHS BY IONE ROBINSON

*Little Girl on bed in dormitory (note Republican bed spreads), Escuela*

*Orphan girl, Escuela*



in London with the people who were able to help Casado carry on his side of the Spanish question that the Venturas exploded. They told him, with Spanish dignity, that he was no authority on their country, and that no Spanish student would ever dare to meddle in the affairs of the United States after a tour of several weeks. I'm sorry this scene occurred, because I'm very fond of Joe. I know how he loves Spain—how he selected that country for his thesis when he graduated from Harvard. I know, too, that what he said was colored by his personal admiration for Casado. Joe is too brilliant and honest really to believe in his heart the things he said yesterday.

I begin to sense through the tenseness of the Venturas what it must mean to lose one's country. They have changed completely in these last months. Every event that happens they try to fit into a pattern which they hope will bring about the end of their exile.

In our village of Chantilly, even though most of the workers are well off, compared to other French towns, there is a growing impatience in the everyday people, provoked by the coming war maneuvers and the constant repetition of broadcasts about Danzig.

Madame Bazin, the fat proprietor of the bistro next door, talks all day long about the Russians. Hitler doesn't worry her nearly so much as Stalin, because the Russians won't sign a mutual assistance pact with the French and English. The Russians say they will sign a pact if the British and the French will give them some military guarantees, too. They want Estonia, Latvia, and Finland's frontiers guaranteed. This does not seem unreasonable; but with the present French attitude, it is clear that they don't want to give any favors, even reasonable ones, to the Russians.

Yesterday we heard Goebbel's speech from Danzig. He said he "was standing on German soil, and that no power on earth could stop the union of Danzig with Germany." Goebbels told the people of Danzig that all of their misfortunes were the result of living at the mouth of the Vistula River, because the Polish had a theory that the mouth of a river belonged to the

state through which it flowed (Poland). Goebbels went on to say that if this were true, Rotterdam would belong to the Germans, as it lies at the mouth of the Rhine. He went on to tell the Poles that he gave them his deepest sympathy because they had become an international problem overnight . . . and against their will. He was fiercely dramatic when he told them that Adolf Hitler had stated that Danzig is German, and from past experiences the world should understand by now that Hitler does not utter empty words.

When I was in Germany last year, I couldn't bring myself to believe that all the German people were ardent followers of Hitler; now I am not so sure, because of the cold-blooded lying that underlines all Nazi policy and the fact that the German people condone it.

Apart from these unpleasant happenings in Europe, a great event happened today. The first Clipper airplane landed in France, near Marseilles, from Port Washington!

Chantilly, June 26, 1939

Every day I've been working out of doors in the open fields of the countryside near Compiègne. I have taken you and Margit with me. I don't like to go alone. We have been having gay picnics in the middle of the day, and as I paint just an hour or so after lunch, we have been fishing the rest of the afternoon.

Most of the small villages on the far side of Senlis look like our western ghost towns: they are silent and without life. One will come suddenly upon a church, a store, a few farmhouses. Most of these villages were destroyed in the war, and as this section was a great battlefield, one cannot escape the sad and dejected faces of the people who live in the villages.

The field that I am painting in is filled with deep craters from exploded shells, and my church is half destroyed, but its fine, slender tower gives the landscape a graceful, detached accent.

You have asked me about the small round photographs that are covered with glass and placed in the center of the lavender

beaded grave adornments that stand in uneven rows among the wild-grass. The faces are of very young men in uniform, the soldiers from this village who were killed in the World War.

The French have such a love of beauty that I can never understand why they make their graves so death-like. The French graves make death seem eternal through their ugliness.

I have been wondering what will become of Dr. Negrin, the former Spanish Premier. He came to lunch yesterday, with Osorio-Tafall. Dr. Negrin gives Franco's regime six months, at the most, to survive. He is still basing his calculations on a general European war. Negrin hasn't much faith in the leaders of either France or England, but he feels, once war breaks out, they will see the danger over the Pyrenees, and help to restore the Republic. He says Franco is in too deep with Hitler and Mussolini even to act as a neutral towards the French and English.

Chantilly, June 30, 1939

My darling,

I have come here to the great sunken garden of the Chateau to write in your journal. It is still early afternoon and you are sleeping.

When I returned from Perpignan, I longed to sit quietly in our garden and try to forget what I have seen during the last weeks. Now I am too worried even to sit in our own garden.

This morning our passports were taken away by the police, who questioned me about the Spaniards who were coming to visit us. The cook ran out of the door while they were in the house, and I don't suppose we will ever see her again. Margit is irritable; even she blames the visit of the police on our guests.

I don't understand what is happening any more in France. Everyone is becoming mean and suspicious. The radio is constantly broadcasting frightening rumors about Germany. They change from day to day—almost hour to hour. On Tuesday Daladier said that France would oppose, with all her force, any

attempt at domination. He said there would be no second Munich, and he intends to keep two classes of trained troops under arms.

Colonel Monnier told me yesterday afternoon that German tracts had been picked up in several industrial centers, both in France and Belgium, telling the people that England is trying to drag them into a war.

When I left the house an hour ago, I crossed through the courtyard leading to the rue de Connetable. All the shopkeepers were standing in their doorways. I saw Madame Bazin, clutching at the hem of her apron. Her husband stood beside her, and they were staring down the street towards the Hotel Condé. When I looked in that direction, I saw the tail end of a fast motorized column; it was turning off on the highway headed east into the valley of Nonette. . . .

Oh, my darling—what kind of world are we living in? When I walked towards the Chateau, I stood for a moment looking at the statue of the Duc d'Aumale, riding his black iron horse. Whenever I walk by this statue I think of this man, the quiet beauty of Chantilly, the exquisite proportions of the Chateau, and these peaceful gardens. And when I look at the paintings of Fragonard and Greuze, hanging in the rooms of the Chateau, it seems the view from the windows is part of their canvases. Everything appears so serene.

But turning through the pages of a book I am reading, I wonder if H. G. Wells is a soothsayer, or if his imagination just runs wild. In this volume, *Homo Sapiens*, he predicts a gloomy picture for the world. He says we are headed for a terrible war of frantic violence, with no rational objective whatever. He says governments will pretend to establish a universal peace, but they will reorganize the world on Fascist lines, with freedom of thought abolished, and superstition and violence ruling in its place. He even writes that our own country may go to pieces without President Roosevelt—that Roosevelt is a great, inspired leader and there is no one to replace him, because nothing is being prepared. . . .

Chantilly, July 13, 1939

If it were not for you and my love of painting, I would be completely lost these days. I sometimes feel that I am two people, because I cannot separate myself as an artist from the events that happen in the world each day. When nighttime comes, I feel exhausted from the news in the papers—an exhaustion that does not come from the physical work I do.

Revolutions, I'm beginning to think, are saner in a way than organized wars, where selfish interests come to the fore, and often the fundamental reasons for fighting are lost.

Every day now the French people are being worked up into keeping their treaty with the Poles, but the people I talk to in our village don't care about the Poles, and somehow the speeches of Daladier haven't stirred hot feelings in them. On July the second the French were much more concerned over what was happening in our country to the Neutrality Act. This made me conscious of what a power the United States is in foreign affairs. Madame Bazin is typical of many French workers. She believes that nothing will happen in Europe because we Americans will somehow prevent it; now with the Neutrality Act unchanged, she thinks we are selling out her country to the Nazis.

The Germans are keeping up their radio and press campaigns, and everything they say gets quickly into circulation. Today the paper announced that two journalists had been arrested: M. Aubin of *Le Temps*, and M. Porier of *Le Figaro*. These men were accused of taking Nazi bribes to encourage a defeatist campaign in the press in order to separate the French people and to influence them against keeping their alliance with Poland. A German professor of drawing, Otto Abetz, was asked to leave Paris, as he is suspected of being the instigator of these bribes. *L'Indifférent* of Watteau has been stolen from the Louvre. Perhaps Mr. Abetz took it back to Berlin with him!

The disappearance of *L'Indifférent* has set Paris on fire. It makes me wonder if after all painting is not more important than



politics. Certainly this small canvas has absorbed the interest of all Paris.

The Spanish Admiral whom I met in Barcelona has been coming often to visit us in Chantilly. Today, before taking the train back to Paris, he said that war was bound to break out soon, as the English were mobilizing their fleet for maneuvers in the North Sea. The Admiral added that the English would never mobilize so many battleships just for a sham battle—that they were really getting prepared for something serious. Last Tuesday Mr. Chamberlain gave his word in the British House of Commons that England would fulfill her pledge to aid Poland, if—the Poles resisted with force any attempt at invasion.

We are leaving for North Africa tomorrow. I was asked to help in more refugee work for the S.E.R.E., and it seems not unwise to leave France now.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

Oran, Algeria, July 20, 1939

We sailed from Port-Vendres on the French Fourth of July (the 14th). This small village was in a gay, festive mood. People crowded the cafés along the waterfront; children were swinging in baskets from the ferris wheels; young girls danced in the streets; bright-colored sailboats moved swiftly across the blue sea. All the tension of Paris has disappeared when one has reached the Mediterranean.

Our ship was crowded. Most of the passengers were well-to-do looking Arabs returning to North Africa. All the way across the Mediterranean I waited anxiously to see the coast of Africa. I have dreamed of this country since I was a little girl. I imagined it would be hot, wild, and as picturesque as the land of the Arabian Nights.

When we docked in this harbor of Oran, I was bitterly disappointed. It looked at first glance like any southern California seaport. The cliffs rose up from the sparkling sea, and the highway that winds up the grade into Oran was paved in smooth black asphalt and crowded with automobiles. Most of the natives here wear European clothes, and there aren't any more Arabs dressed in white sheets than those one sees in the Paris Metro.

It was not until last evening, when walking through the old section of the city, that I felt or smelled Africa. Walking through the native quarter, I could feel the desert in the wind. On one particular street there were long wooden tables crowded with Arabian men wrapped in white robes, sitting silently as stones, smoking their water-pipes. I saw no women, and I was completely ignored, as was the former Spanish Consul's wife. It was interesting to watch Osorio-Tafall and the other Spaniards who were escorting us through this native quarter. Perhaps their mood was the result of the whining, low, or shrill music from the dozens of radios suspended under the roofs of the low buildings. At any rate, they seemed bewitched. They acted like animals that had heard the "voice of the wilderness," and I ex-

pected at any moment to see them bolt off, to return dressed as Arabs and become one of those silent, sitting stones. Most Spaniards are supposed to have some Arab blood flowing through their veins, but as Osorio-Tafall comes from Galicia and prides himself on being a Celt, I was amused at his African trance.

There were no women in the native quarter last night, but I did see a white-veiled creature leaning against the iron window grating of a two-story white house with a smooth rounded dome, on top of which was a tiny iron moon and a star. I watched her, while I leaned against a wall with moving shadows cast by a fig tree; I felt very mysterious seeing the shadows and the veiled woman, and listening to the whining music.

When we returned to our hotel, we all sat in the lobby drinking Arab tea. This hotel, which is supposed to be another "Grand Hotel," is the most filthy place I have ever seen. There is no dust; there is just a good layer of nasty dirt on everything.

The Spanish officials who have been caught in Oran want to know what is happening to Dr. Negrin in Paris. They are full of stories about the concentration camps of Africa, which were constructed on the edge of the Sahara. All of the soldiers who fled to North Africa were rounded up in the same manner as those who fled over the Pyrenees into France, but their fate sounds worse because they have been interned in the blistering desert sun.

The news from Europe is not played up here. The most important dispatch in tonight's paper is about our own President Roosevelt, and his point of view on the Neutrality bill.

Algiers, Algeria, July 22, 1939

There is no comparison between this city and Oran. Algiers is fairly clean and modern. Our hotel room has the identical flowered wallpaper as my bedroom in Chantilly. Margit feels quite at home and you are thriving. The women of Algiers wear their veils straight across the nose. The custom of showing one eye seems purely a mode of Oran.

Even though this city is completely French and modern along the waterfront, I begin to feel now that I am in another world. The great Mosque, the Casbah, and the old men with their turbans who squat on their heels by the walls of the Casbah telling fortunes in tiny piles of sand make one feel irrelevant. I have never felt so foreign, so alien. These women of Africa move through the streets wrapped from head to foot like creatures belonging to some secret society, engaged in plotting an intrigue.

There is a remarkable light from this African sun. It has an unusual brilliance. I noticed this when I took you to the zoo this afternoon. The animals and strange birds had the most gorgeous colorings, and it was not from any pigment in their skins or their feathers, because they lost this brilliance in the shade. In the sun, they looked like jewels.

In the museum this afternoon I saw a large, unfinished Delacroix. I understand now where Delacroix found his rich palette. Here in this country, your vision seems as fresh, as unspoiled as a child's, and in spite of the feeling of the mystery and intrigue of the people, you are carried away by the sensuous beauty of the country.

I have been wondering about three things, sitting here in the garden of our hotel. Why do Arabs like clocks, and fountain pens? And how on earth do they ever find their shoes, among the hundreds that are left in the patio outside the Mosque?

Today the sympathetic Ambroise Vollard was killed in an auto crash. He was one of the few people who collected paintings for the sheer love of painting.

Algiers, July 23, 1939

This morning while you were having your hair washed, I went into the forbidden Casbah with the Spanish Consul's wife and an Arab servant of hers. We drove in a car to the top of the hill so that we could walk down, instead of up the Casbah. On the hill-top we encountered a regular Cook's tour guide, an Arab, and because he was wearing an official-looking button, I hired him to tag along.

The Casbah is made up of hundreds of narrow streets that twist and turn like a piece of string. They are sordid, dirty alleys that smell to high heaven, and I saw the most hideous, grotesque-looking women sitting in these alleys. The soles of their feet and the palms of their hands were painted a tobacco henna color, and their teeth were painted black.

Unexpectedly, we came across a school for children. Little boys (no girls) were sitting cross-legged under a spreading fig tree that grew in the center of an enclosed patio. Their teacher, an old Arab, sat mumbling from the Koran, and all the children were droning out loud like bees. When the teacher saw us, he made an ugly face and grabbed a long stick, switching it through the air at us as though we were a plague of flies.

Our guide was very crafty. He saw that I was an artist by my sketching pad, and he asked if I would like to sketch in the house of a rich merchant. It would cost me fifty francs. I gave him the fifty francs (he wouldn't budge until he had this money) and then we started down the hill. Finally he disappeared through a doorway and stayed so long that I was certain he had fled over the walls of the Casbah with my money. I was surprised when finally he poked his head out and told us to come in.

Once inside, the sordidness of the Casbah vanished. We were standing in a dream of the Arabian Nights, and even if it were a phoney, paid dream, I was enchanted. We were in a pale blue and magenta tiled patio. In the center there was a fountain with golden water lilies, and reclining underneath slender Moorish arches was a group of women dressed like the Odalisques of Matisse. A few were eating some strange fruit from a silver bowl, while a group of young girls sat in a circle playing with small round pebbles. A woman who acted as major-domo told me I could make a drawing, but when I started to draw my eyes refused to stay in one place, and I caught a glimpse of a black face with a ruby-turbaned head watching the women and me. This smiling, shining, black man was sitting in a tiny window, and our guide told us he was the eunuch guard of the women.

Suddenly the woman who had given me the permission told us all to get out, and I was furious . . . but then, it had been something to see.

Tomorrow morning I am leaving at four o'clock with the S.E.R.E. officials for the concentration camp of Sussoni. You and Margit are staying in the Spanish Consulate until I return, which will be just overnight, if we manage to get up in time tomorrow.

Boghar, Algeria, July 24, 1939

It was too dark to see the country we passed through early this morning; long after daybreak, when we were riding through the Atlas mountains, a freak, heavy fog made it impossible to see more than a half block in front of the car. This fog made me afraid because I had noticed the driver, a former Spanish flier, was driving one-handed: he had no left hand at all.

Around nine in the morning we drove down the last grade into a beautiful flat valley. The valley was full of Arab horsemen, galloping directly into the sun, their red capes flying behind them. These horsemen were the only thing that kept this valley from looking like the San Fernando valley in California. The villages were uninteresting, and the gasoline stations spoiled whatever picturesque charm they had. But soon these signs of European civilization disappeared. The valley began to lose its green vegetation, the earth became parched and dry, and you knew you were riding headlong into the desert.

At eleven we arrived at Boghar, a one-street, windswept village. Here were Arabs wearing great multicolored straw hats instead of turbans on their heads, and women without veils, heavily tattooed on the chin and forehead.

The French military barracks were at the end of the street. The colonel in command of the French at Boghar (and the concentration camps) was tall, handsome, cold, and rough-mannered. But then, one would have to be ruthless to stand this desert.

The Commandant was proud of his concentration camp, and he was even anxious for the Spanish officers to inspect the barracks, down to the warehouses of provisions.

Sussoni was built out in the blistering sun; there was not a tree in the entire enclosure. But beyond the camp were trees, growing on low rolling hills. The barracks of Sussoni looked like squatters' shacks. They had canvas awnings stretched from the roofs and propped up by poles which were sunk into the sandy ground.

Most of the prisoners were wearing their Republican caps, but a few had straw helmets. They were more ragged than the prisoners of France. The hospital was crowded with beds. A great many were sick in Sussoni. I saw Foreign Legion posters tacked all over the camp, but the Commandant said that none of the Spaniards wanted to join. He looked relieved when the S.E.R.E. people concluded arrangements to evacuate a certain number in the next immigration ship.

The prisoners stared at the Spanish officials in a distrustful manner. They shouted and screamed, like animals caught in a trap. They said they knew they were doomed to die out here on the desert, and they laughed out loud at the thought of a ship. Osorio-Tafall tried to bolster up their morale, and to convince them. He took off his sun helmet and tried to speak like an officer, but if it hadn't been for the French guards, he would have been torn to pieces. The moment the S.E.R.E. officials started to leave the camp, the prisoners shouted like madmen. They didn't want to go to Mexico, or to South America. They wanted to go home.

Here in this last outpost of the Sahara news had trickled through that only yesterday Franco removed his faithful General Guiepo de Llano from his post as Military Governor of Seville, and that General Yaque had been arrested. Both of these generals were against the Falange; they wanted the Falange leaders thrown out of Franco's government, especially his brother-in-law, Serrano Suñer.

The prisoners of Sussoni even knew that Besterio, the socialist

who was an accomplice with Casado in betraying the Negrin government, had been sentenced to thirty years' imprisonment; and they knew all about the daily mass executions—inside Spain. One young prisoner told me why everyone at Sussoni was so demoralized. He said there had been rumors that they were going to be turned into labor battalions. He said there were plans to build a railway far into the desert, and that no one wanted to spend his life building a railway in the Sahara for the French—after three years of war.

The sick at Sussoni are so young, and their faces look like those of whipped puppies. This place would break even the strongest in a few days. It has to do with the desert. There are very few who try to run away from Sussoni.

The Commandant had prepared a special dinner for the S.E.R.E. officials. I was too exhausted from the heat and the prisoners to eat. I lay on the top of a wooden table on the porch in front of the Commandant's office, trying to breathe some coolness from the wooden boards of the table.

I don't think I have the moral fortitude to look into the eyes of another Spanish prisoner. Sussoni has done this to me. If one were to have even a normal life of exile in this God-forsaken part of Africa, it would seem like a prison, because of the desert. But to have the desert and the barbed wire surrounding one—how could a man keep any illusions?

All of the experiences of this summer have made me feel like an old woman. I was not prepared to see the suffering of those who have lost their country. I don't like even to imagine ever losing my own.

While I was lying on the table I heard the beating of drums. I raised my head, to see a most weird sight. A tall, black man, dressed in a long purple robe with a white sash round his waist and wearing one of the great hats of Boghar, was leaping into the air like a dolphin. And then he would stand still and shake like a plate of cold jello. The Arabs watched him with blank faces. They would throw coins into the air, and the black man would catch the coins like a trained seal, swallowing them in one gulp.



He must have swallowed twenty coins in the few minutes I watched him. Finally he turned around, dragging a long panther tail which had been fastened on the back of his sash, and walked off into the desert!

Late in the afternoon the Commandant took us to see some native dancers. We sat on the floor in a large room. An old man played a horn-like pipe, accompanied by an even more ancient Arab beating a leather drum. The dancers would take turns in dancing a slow, rhythmic dance, alone. They would never dance together, and they took turns wearing a wide, golden belt. They held their long, braided hair in the tips of their fingers, moving their shoulders gracefully and swaying their hips without ever changing the position of their feet.

It is evening now, and we are starting back to Algiers. I have been looking far out into the desert. There is a deep purple high above in the sky, and on the horizon line the sun has left a thin streak of vermillion. The wind is beginning to blow hard, and there is a twirling white cone of sand that is moving towards Sussoni.

Telemcen, July 27, 1939

When we left Algiers by train the other day, I had in mind traveling as far as the city of Fes in French Morocco. From the look of things, we will never see Fes this summer, as Margit will not move another inch in North Africa. I have never seen anyone so disagreeable and miserable.

You and I were thrilled with the train trip from Algiers to this lovely town of Telemcen, which lies on the slopes of the Lella Setta hills. It is cooler here right now than in New York in the month of July.

As we came to Telemcen for a few days of real vacation and pleasure, I have been making sketches from early morning until late afternoon. The market place is fascinating. The streets are lined with little shops filled with fine fabrics of silk with threads of gold and silver woven into them. There are veils as fine as

cobwebs dotted with sparkling sequins; in the cobbler shops young boys are sewing soft red leather boots with half-moon toes for the Arab horsemen. There is a feeling of magic in the air in Telemcen. Towards sunset one hears the chanting of the priests. Their voices float over the city from the tall minarets. Telemcen is a town of mosques. Our Arab guide told me today that when the French first took over Telemcen there were sixty-four mosques in the city.

This morning I photographed you with a little boy in the Mosque of Sidi-Ahmed-bel Hassan, which is now a museum. While we were walking through the alabaster courts of Sidi-Ahmed-bel Hassan, I thought for a moment that we were in Barcelona, in the Palace of the Generalitat. The columns in that ancient palace are identical with the carved alabaster pillars of this Mosque. In Spain one feels Africa, and in Africa one begins to understand Spain. The first Sultan to rule Telemcen, Sidi Bu Medin, was born in Seville!

I have painted one very good canvas of a young Arab girl. It is a pity that you are so young, as the place in which I made this painting is something to remember. Our guide took us there; as the owner of this house was a friend of his, I was able to paint this child without any annoyances.

The room in which I worked was long, with high ceilings. The walls were covered with mirrors (and clocks). The furnishings consisted of several low brass tables, with pillows scattered around them. It seems that Arabs never sit on chairs. I had an audience all the while I painted. The wives of the house watched every brush stroke while they drank endless bowls of tea. And while I painted you played with the scarfs and trinkets of these women. I am certain that when you grow up you will be a dress designer, as already you have managed to wrap a perfect turban on your head, and you amused everyone with the veil you tied across your nose!

The plaza of this town is entirely covered with vine leaves that grow in such a manner that they shade the entire square and it seems as though one were sitting in a garden. No Arab

women ever sit at the tables in the plaza, and it is strange to see the men constantly sipping tea. These Arab men have superb heads. On the whole, they are an extremely handsome race. Every feature is well developed, and even though there are identical underlying characteristics, each head has a particular distinction of its own. Their light copper skins, beautifully curved noses, and shining black eyes were made for painters.

This afternoon I was thinking of this brilliant color of Africa. It is the white—the eternal white of the buildings—that makes this country so colorful. The whiteness of the buildings is the same as the white surface of a canvas which intensifies other colors.

To paint anything worthwhile in this country, one should stay for a time and become thoroughly familiar with these people. One would have to learn to look beyond the picturesqueness of the landscape and of the people.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

Chantilly, August 10, 1939

All day long I have been packing our belongings. We are moving into Paris. Since returning from North Africa, it is apparent that Europe is headed for an explosion, unless a miracle happens to straighten out the mess over Danzig.

The English seem just one jump ahead of the French in preparing their people for a crisis. Whatever they do is followed up by the French. Now we are all going to be given gas masks. Six days ago the English were finished with the grown-ups, and concentrating on masks for babies. They were encouraging mothers to let their children play with these masks, in order not to be frightened by them.

Colonel Monnier advises me to make preparations to return to America. Monnier has been collecting all sorts of equipment before leaving for Abyssinia. He is a close friend of Haile Selassie, who is in exile in England. Colonel Monnier is very mysterious about his trip and I do not ask him questions, because he is an officer and I know he would never answer them. Nevertheless, he has often said: "One day you will understand about this trip—what I am doing—and you will think I am a very wise French colonel."

The Paris papers have been full of another German plot aimed to confuse and split French public opinion. The German drawing professor, Otto Abetz, who was ordered to leave Paris a few weeks ago, has filed a law suit with the French Ministry of Justice against the Deputy, Henri de Kerillis, editor of the journal *L'Epoque*. Abetz accuses de Kerillis of defamation of character, and he is forcing on the Daladier government the kind of publicity which its decree against espionage tried to stop.

While we were away, the police ransacked the apartment of Maruja Sanchez-Ventura and took away all of her husband's books and papers, as well as a large Spanish Republican flag which had been the battle flag of the "East Army." Maruja was in tears when she described the way they tore the flag from the

wall and used it to tie up the books and papers in. Then she told me about a new spy code, which is the most severe anti-espionage measure ever enforced in France. Anyone caught giving out military information of any kind that has not been publicly released by the government gets the death sentence. The death sentence is also given to those who reveal measures taken to arrest spies; to those who report on investigations and court proceedings; to those who destroy or damage materials related to national defense, and to those who undermine the faith of anyone serving in the armed forces.

Maruja ruefully said that so far the only people who are harassed in Paris are the Republican Spaniards—who certainly have no plots against France.

I read in this evening's papers that there is a new British-French Commission in Moscow, trying to complete an anti-aggression bloc with the Russians. If this can be done now . . . it is the one thing that will keep the lid from blowing off in Europe. But as it hasn't been done before, I don't have any illusions that it will succeed now.

Little Joe Kennedy took me to lunch near Senlis with our Ambassador to Latvia and his wife, who arrived in France a few days ago. When we came home the Ambassador went sound asleep in my room. From the way he acted and from what he said, he is not the least bit worried.

Paris, August 20, 1939

Margit has become practically useless as a nurse for you. All day long she has been walking the floor or sitting for long periods on the edge of the bathtub, wringing her hands and wanting to leave France. I have never seen anyone so afraid. I am disgusted with her because she is a Frenchwoman and the reason for her fears is based on one particular thing: she is afraid she will be asked to work in some defense industry.

Everyone in Paris is becoming suspicious of everybody else.

There is a frightful anti-Semitic feeling growing; in the stores there are sales of all kinds of merchandise. Everybody is selling out.

I have taken advantage of this hysteria, and have collected some beautiful pieces of furniture. Señor Ventura dreams about antiques. He has been walking with me each afternoon along the Left Bank, looking for bargains. Yesterday we had an amusing experience. I wanted a guitar. We were given an address where I could find one. When we located this place, we found ourselves in a dark room with high cabinets standing against the walls. Finally a funny little man came into the room. He carefully unlocked each cabinet, and guitars of every description literally fell on the floor. The moment he spoke we knew that he was Spanish. He told us he was leaving for Madrid, now that Madrid was quiet without the "Reds." He was certain there would be war in France, and he was very much against wars. That was why he left Spain for France, and now he would leave France for Spain.

The Germans are still keeping everyone on edge over Danzig. When I read the haranguing of Hitler's stooge, Albert Foerster, I am glad that there is an ocean between Germany and America. I wonder what would happen to our German-Americans if there weren't any ocean? "One people, one Reich, one Fuehrer," might go on forever.

Some people are certain that a Professor Burckhardt, the High Commissioner of the League of Nations for Danzig, will be successful in settling the Danzig crisis. Already this Swiss professor of history is making the same kind of history that Chamberlain made. He is riding the same shuttle train from Berchtesgaden to London, stopping now and again in Poland. But I'm afraid he won't do this much longer, as the Germans have come out in the open and have laid down the law on International Conferences. They say the only one they will attend will be a meeting on the Western Front, with the "British fairy-tale tellers and liars."

Today I went especially to the Louvre to see Watteau's *L'Indifférent*. It is hard to know just what the French police will do with the thief, a young Russian painter who returned the picture of his own free will. He confessed he stole *L'Indifférent* because he could not bear to see it so badly restored. After cleaning the picture and removing certain touches which he claimed had been added by other artists who restored the painting after Watteau's time, this Russian brought the picture back, wrapped in a newspaper. The Louvre experts admit the painting is in far better condition than before it was stolen.

Paris, August 24, 1939

This evening, when we were about to sit down to dinner, it was announced on the radio that the Russians had signed a non-aggression agreement with Germany. There was only one person among our guests who was not stunned speechless, and that was Montecon, a former Spanish professor of history.

I could not believe the news at first. Maruja Ventura looked as if she were going to faint. Her husband looked like one betrayed. Osorio-Tafall was cynical. But Montecon tried to find the rational answer. He said that the Russians had out-smarted the English and French, who had been trying all along to make the Germans attack the Russians, that the English and French had been easy bait for Hitler's anti-Comintern pact, which was simply a cover to hide his real aims against England and France. Montecon said that the British and French reactionaries were to blame; that they never wanted to make a fair nonaggression pact with the Russians, but merely intended to use the military strength of the U.S.S.R. to pull their chestnuts out of the fire.

As an American, I find it hard to exercise any reason tonight. I am, I'm afraid, a hopeless idealist. I have heard this great Soviet Republic described so often as the hope of the entire world, and I have heard many brilliant men, like Mr. Baruch, say that it was the same sort of thing as National Socialism, and that sooner or later Russia and Germany would merge.

Whatever has happened, it is certainly a blow to the rest of the world, and it has upset every calculation of what might have happened on this continent in the next weeks.

Paris, August 27, 1939

In a few minutes we will be on our way. Even though we have no tickets for a ship, Osorio insisted on our leaving Paris. He is driving us to the north of France. I would never believe him, when he said war was "inevitable." But now I have lost my optimism that a war can be avoided. Hitler has absolutely refused to negotiate for peace and has turned down Daladier's proposals. All the newspapers, radios, and theaters have a strict censorship put on them. The American Embassy has sent another order for Americans to leave.

Daladier has been trying to stiffen the French people into accepting a declaration of war. On the radio he told them, over and over, that there would be no second Munich; he told them that France would keep her word to the Poles; that as Frenchmen they would never betray their ideals, nor their honor.

This afternoon I watched the farewells of the reservists, called up to the Maginot Line. They are leaving for the front, with nothing more than small paper or imitation leather suitcases in their hands. I could hear a pin drop in the silence of the Gare d'Este. The emotion and strain on the faces of these men was so apparent that the silence seemed abnormal.

Last minute messages are flying through the air, from France to Germany, and from Germany to France. Hitler asked Daladier how he would feel if such a city as Marseilles were prevented from belonging to France, while its French citizens were persecuted and murdered. Hitler says that Germany would never think of fighting France to prevent stolen French territory from returning to the French.

From our living room balcony, I can see a long line of cars in the street below. At the corner where the Trocadero Gardens begin, there are several French officers sitting on wooden boxes.



They are requisitioning the cars of whoever happens to drive along.

I'm not taking any of the things I love with us, for there is no place to put them. You and I each have one bag, and I'm taking a bundle of drawings—the people I drew in the concentration camps. I have just ripped them from their frames. Margit has everything she owns, and because she's acting like a madwoman, I let her alone.

I am leaving the rest of our things just as though we were going away for a week end. I wonder if we will ever see them again? Like a great many other sentimental people, I am still hoping for a miracle that will prevent the war, and if it were not for you I would not go back to America at all. The other day our own Postmaster-General, Mr. Farley, said that he thought the Pope could still do something—but I thought this lost weight when he remarked that he had just come from Warsaw, where the Poles were lined up with their sabers, ready to strike back at the first German who dared to invade their country.

Trouville, August 30, 1939

We have been away from Paris three days. There has been no declaration of war, but the air is still full of foreboding.

I am ashamed of Margit. She sailed yesterday on the *Champlain*. After waiting in the long queues in front of the French Line and the United States Line in Le Havre, I managed to secure just one ticket for a cot on the *Champlain*. All the way back to Trouville on the launch, Osorio tried to force me to take the one ticket for myself and for you. He said that Margit was French, and France was going to declare war and she had no right to run away; that I was an American and I had a child, and it was my duty to leave.

During dinner last night I kept the one ticket secret. But when we went for a short walk along the beach, I saw that Margit would lose her mind if she couldn't leave France. She had no courage, no dignity. When I reached in my purse and

took out the ticket and gave it to her, the way she fell on her knees was sickening.

Osorio was furious—he tried to make her give it back, but I ran with you to my room. And now she is gone, and we are still here.

Everyone (and they are nice people) in this hotel is drunk. People are singing and shouting. Nobody knows what he's doing.

Osorio will not leave us, not until we have a ticket. He has been in Le Havre since early morning. I wonder if he'll have one when he returns.

Sitting here watching you play in the sand, and listening to the singing of the frightened, drunken people, I have been thinking about the workmen who were taking out the large rose windows in the Cathedral of Rouen. Sunday night, when we stopped to rest in a café directly in front of the cathedral, I felt terribly weary, watching the workers taking out those great windows. Now everything of any value or beauty will have to be hidden. Everything that is not human and alive, everything that is beautiful in France, will be buried. . . .

Trouville, September 1, 1939

Still we have no passage for America. At five this morning, German planes dropped bombs on three Polish cities: Gdynia, Cracow, and Katonice. While armored divisions smashed into Poland, Hitler screamed to the German people that Poland had first attacked the Germans, and ordered the Army to "fulfill their duty to the end."

Now that the real violence has commenced in Poland, the French in Trouville are going to pieces; they are behaving miserably. In our hotel none of the employees will do a stroke of work. Chambermaids, cooks, and waiters have started a war among themselves (they still seem oblivious of the Poles). Their bitterness is like that of one falsely convicted of a crime. There is real madness in this village. Every French man, woman, and child

knows that his civilian identity will be lost—after today. All will become part of a carefully calculated war machine.

I have hardly been able to find enough for you to eat. Osorio is taking us back to Le Havre before dark. He says we must get out of here, as the launch connecting Trouville with Le Havre will make its last trip across the Bay in about an hour.

Le Havre, September 3, 1939

Today, war was declared on Germany by England and France!

Boulogne, September 5, 1939

I have given up all hope of ever leaving France. After waiting for hours in the long lines of panicky people in the streets of Le Havre, Osorio insisted we leave that port. He said that he had heard we could board a Dutch ship at Boulogne, if we drove there immediately.

Driving through the black night took hours. We had to crawl like a blind man along the jammed highway. And once we were stalled for hours, while horses and cattle were moved along the highway from Le Havre in the direction of Boulogne. All livestock is being requisitioned for the army.

When we finally arrived here we were told the Dutch ship had changed her course again and is not docking at Boulogne. Osorio tried to make me go on to Antwerp, but I wouldn't do it. Now we are starting back to Le Havre again.

Le Havre, September 8, 1939

Today I sat on a bench with Osorio watching an old man chalk up the names of Polish villages on a blackboard in front of the Square St. Roch, where you were playing. An hour or so later I could not believe my eyes when he came back to wipe them off the blackboard with a dirty rag. During the last seven

days, Poland has nearly disappeared from the face of the earth.

This evening after I put you to bed in our tiny room near the attic of a hotel along the waterfront, I went upstairs and sat on the roof with Osorio. It seemed that we were back in Barcelona; there was not a single light in the city, nor on the port. There was no light anywhere. . . .

While "Bibi" and I were sitting in the darkness, I could not help wondering what was coming—if this could be the war I have heard about for so many years: not a war against Poland, nor against England and France, but a gigantic struggle to overturn the existing order of things.

Le Havre, September 9, 1939

My dearest little girl:

This morning when we started out to make the usual rounds of the steamship offices, we found the French Line closed. Sandbags were stacked in front of the building, just as I had remembered them stacked around the slender columns of the Palace of the Generalitat in Barcelona.

I asked Osorio to drive along the Grand Quai. I was ready to take any boat sailing anywhere away from this country. It is hard to believe when I write this that I saw the freighter, the *Wisconsin*, which had been in the port of Barcelona . . . I jumped from the car and ran alongside the ship, calling for the captain. An old seaman leaned over the deck. I yelled up to him, "Is this the *Wisconsin* that was in Spain?" and asked to see the captain. My heart sank when he called back that it was the same boat, but she had been sold twice since the war in Spain, and the captain who commanded her then had long since left the ship. . . .

We drove back to the Square St. Roch. The old man was still "wiping out Poland" on his blackboard. Today the Germans have driven their panzer divisions nearly into the outskirts of Warsaw, and an English ship—the *Athenia*—with Americans on board has been sunk!

I was so tired this afternoon that I didn't care where the

Germans were any more—but I was afraid when I read about the *Athenia*.

You were playing with some children near the fountain, when I said good-by to "Bibi." This is the second time in my life I have had to steel myself to send someone away that I cared for deeply. I once sent my brother away, to keep an illusion of what I wanted him to be. Now I am trying to keep another illusion.

I could tell what Osorio was thinking, when that old man with the rag kept wiping off the Polish towns, but I never thought that he would want to go away. It was while he was watching the old man that he told me whatever he had dreamed for Spain was finished—that whatever I had risked my life for was finished. He said that I belonged to a lost generation. Now the war would reach such a hideous momentum that the world would be rocking into a cataclysm. He told me that "Republics" were going to be submerged in the disorder and violence that is bound to follow this cataclysm.

I tried to pretend that I did not understand what he was saying. I told him it was getting late—he must go back to Paris. And then I asked him, trying to smile, if he remembered "Poblet." I repeated his words: "It is 'inevitable' in the destiny of Spain that a Republic will be victorious." I said I had always believed that Republics would be victorious, and I still believed it, even if one had to wait a very long time.

He told me I was a baby—that all Americans thought with the innocence of babies. And that he wanted to go away, as far from Europe as he could . . . to South America.

I asked him if he thought South America would be secure. I was relieved when he smiled. I could tell by his eyes he was going back to his people. Without answering, he picked up his topcoat and quickly said good-by. I watched his car disappear in the direction of Paris. . . .

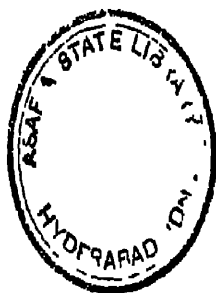
I am not sorry that I saw him "breaking" (just a little) this afternoon. We all feel like this at times, when we are faced with decisions that absorb our moral strength. When I think of France this summer, I will always think of her as a beautiful

woman who could never make a decision. She was always trying to "fix the situation." No one in France ever wanted to go to war. And nothing ever really seemed to bother the people, until the day the young men were ordered to the Gare d'Este with their pathetic paper suitcases, and there was that awful stillness over the city—as though Paris were dying.

I don't know how we managed to secure a ticket late this afternoon, but we have a place on the *Manhattan*, which is sailing tomorrow. You watched her come into the dock towards the end of the day, and I pointed your little hand towards the stars and stripes painted along her side. Now I feel I can breathe again. Tomorrow we will be sailing safely home.

But—I will always remember Bibi's eyes; the eyes of the women and children of Barcelona; the eyes of the prisoners in concentration camps. And this dazed, frantic stare in the eyes of the French. Really, I am beginning to wonder if I will ever paint again. . . .

THE END





# INDEX

- Abetz, Otto, 413, 425  
 Abraham Lincoln Brigade, 305-6, 352, 380  
 Abyssinia, 425  
 Academia de Bellas Artes, 190  
 Academy (French), 41  
 — (Italian), 68  
 Academy of San Carlos, 190  
 Acapulco, 195  
 Adirondacks, 32  
 Africa, 60, 282, 422  
 Al, 18  
 Alameda, 159  
 Alaska, 57  
 Alba, Duke of, 314, 385  
 Alba, Ramon, 90, 105, 110, 167  
 Alexandroff, 153, 172, 207  
 Alfonso XIII, 154, 317, 320, 332  
 Algiers, 416, 422  
 Alice, 135  
*Alice in Wonderland*, 11  
 Allen, Jay, 296  
 Alps, 51  
 Alsace-Lorraine, 403  
 Alston, Mrs., 118-19  
 Alter de Perdon, 159  
 Altimira, 405  
 Amaro, Gen., 186  
 American Artists' Congress, 252, 272  
 American Express Co., 40-1, 85  
 Amero, Emilio, 191, 254  
 Ami, Jacob Ben, 134  
 Amsterdam, 283  
 Amtorg Trading Corporation, 139  
 Angeles Crest, 228  
 Anne, 266-77, 290, 296, 300, 309, 320, 416, 419  
 Antibes, 57-9, 72  
 Anti-Comintern pact, 428  
 Apocalypse, 159  
 Arabian Nights, 181, 296, 319, 415, 418  
 Aragon, 359  
 Arenal, Luis, 254  
 Arens, Mr., 10-12, 130  
 —, Mr., Sr., 10-16, 20  
 —, Mrs., 11-15, 18  
 Argeles, 396-7, 399, 405  
 Aristocrat, 80  
 Aristotle, 84  
 Armitage, Merle, 30, 79-80, 84  
 Armstrong, Hamilton Fish, 399-401  
 Arnautoff, Victor, 160, 163-4, 166  
 Arno River, 69  
 Artists' Union, 255-6  
 Art Projects, 253-7  
 —, Hitler's, 367  
 Art Students' League, 12, 17, 152  
 Ascarate, Col., 393, 396-7  
 Asturias, 329, 336  
*Athenia*, 435  
 Atholl, Duchess of, 394, 406  
 Atl, Dr., 98  
 Atlantic, 42, 75  
 Atlantic City, 136-7, 147  
 Atlas Corporation, 140  
 Atlas Mountains, 419  
 Aubin, 413  
 Audac, 24-5  
*Augustus*, 74  
 Auntie Julie, 220, 226  
 Ausable Forks, N. Y., 33, 150  
 Austerlitz, N. Y., 34  
 Austria, 278, 287  
 Avenida Juarez, 159  
 Avenue de Tokio, 264  
 Azana, 349  
 —, Señora, 349  
 Aztec Codices, 97  
 Aztecs, 198, 202, 207, 344, 383  
 Bacciocchi, Antoine, 267, 271, 306  
 —, Charles, 267, 271, 306  
 —, Mme., 266, 306  
 Bach, Fritz, 105, 194-5, 197, 200-1, 308  
 Baker, Joe, 135  
 Bal Nègre, 46, 252  
 Baltic Sea, 287  
 Bankers Trust Co., Paris, 37  
 Bankhead, Tallulah, 381  
 —, William B., 381  
 Barcares, 400  
 Barcelona, 100, 279, 305, 308, 316, 318, 320-49, 351, 355-6, 368, 382-5, 387, 414, 423, 433, 435  
 Barreiros, 125  
 Barrie, Sir James, 227  
 Barrio of San Miguel, 183  
 — Chino, 327  
 Barrios, Bennie Pancho, 341-3, 350, 366



- Baruch, Bernard, 30, 289-91, 294, 305, 307, 310-14, 428  
 Battery, 11  
 Baz, Dr., 194  
 Bazin, Mme., 409, 412-13  
 Beals, Carleton, 115, 124-7, 157, 160  
 Beaverbrook, Lord, 313  
 Beekman Street Hospital, 277, 285-6, 295  
 Beigamin, José, 367  
 Belasco, David, 17  
 Belgium, 412  
 Belle Island, Canada, 38  
 Belles Artes, 111, 197  
 Bellevue Hospital, 254  
 Bellows, George, 235  
 Belvedere Gardens, 119  
 Berchtesgaden, 319, 327  
 Berenguer, 154  
 Berle, Adolf, 213  
 —, Mrs., 213  
 Berlin, 165, 287, 368, 374-7  
 Bernstein, Mr., 140, 177-8, 196, 210-11  
 —, Mrs., 177-9, 210-11  
 Bessie, 126  
 Best's, 220  
 Besterio, 420  
 Best-Maugard, Adolphe, 107, 117, 169  
 Beza, 310  
 Biarritz, 300  
 Biddle, George, 75-6, 83, 253  
 Black, Helen, 196  
 Black Shirts, 376  
*Blind Guitar Player*, 119  
 Bloch, Lou, 253, 255  
 —, Paul, 256  
 Blum, Leon, 301, 306  
 Blume, Jerome, 45  
 Blumes, 47  
 Bobbie, 18  
 Bogdanoff, Mr., 133, 139  
 Boghar, 419  
 Boissevain, Mr., 58  
 —, Mrs., 58  
 Boissevains, 58  
 Bonus Army, 206  
 Borrás, Enrique, 388, 405  
 Bosh, 407  
 Boston, 54, 282  
 Botticelli, 67  
 Boucher, 41, 43  
 Boulogne, 432  
 Bourke-White, Margaret, 141  
 Bravo, Manuel, 176, 189  
 Brenner, Anita, 167  
 —, M., 402-3  
 — Pass, 287  
 Breughel, Pieter, 144  
 Brevoort Restaurant, 15  
 Briand, 148  
 Brittany, 407  
 Brooklyn, 119, 347, 353  
 Broun, Heywood, 148, 253  
 Bryan, Dr., 77-9, 118  
 Bucna Vista, 169  
 Buenos Aires, 98  
 Bullfight, 115, 167  
 Bullitt, Ambassador, 307-8, 311, 318  
 Buñuel, Luis, 301-4, 308  
 Burckhardt, Prof., 427  
 Burgos, 339  
 Burkin-Rykoff trials, 281  
 Butler, Nicholas Murray, 295  
 Cadiz, 385  
 Café Broadway, 104, 114  
 — Dôme, 40  
 — La Casita, 296  
 — Neapolitan, 391  
 — Rose, 52  
 — Select, 46  
 Cagnes-sur-Mer, 49-63, 71  
 California, 3, 6, 13, 16, 30, 50, 60, 80, 85, 92, 98, 118, 126, 138, 150, 160, 162, 198-9, 207, 258, 323, 415  
 — Art Club, 79  
 Calles, 80-2, 109, 125  
 Calvin, 310  
 Cameroons, 369  
 Campagna, 259  
 Canada, 36-7  
 Canadians, 360  
*Candide*, 31-4  
 Cannes, 58  
 Cantu, 78  
 Capacitation school, 351, 388  
 Carabinero, 322  
 Carcassone, 401, 405  
 Cardenas, Juan, 288  
 Carmelite Convent, 47  
 Carminatti, Tullio, 298  
 Carnegie, Andrew, 293-4  
 Carroll, John, 16, 30, 44-6, 49, 76

- Carroll, Mrs., 46-9  
 Carrolls, 44, 46, 49  
 Carstairs, Carroll, Gallery, 286, 290  
 —, Mrs., 292  
 Casa del Indio, 109  
 Casado, Col., 387, 391, 408-9, 421  
 Casals, Pablo, 349  
 Castellanos, Julio, 192, 277  
 Casbah, 417-18  
 Castlerosse, Lord, 312  
 Catalonia, 305, 326, 334, 344, 348,  
     384, 388, 397  
 Catholics, 81  
 Catskills, 15  
 Cecielo, 398  
 Central Committee, 198-200  
*Ce Soir*, 308  
 Cézanne, 42-3, 76, 128, 139  
 Chamber of Deputies, 301  
 Chamberlain, 311, 315, 319, 324, 329,  
     333-5, 338, 414, 427  
*Champlain*, 430  
 Chanel, 58, 102  
 Chantilly, 307, 392, 401, 407-8, 412-  
     14, 425  
 Chapingo, 93  
 Chaplin, Charlie, 115  
 Chapultepec, 190  
 Chardin, 41-2  
 Charles IV, 371  
 Charleston, S. C., 217  
 Charlot, Jean, 167, 176, 240  
 Chartres, 48-9  
 — Cathedral, 48  
 Chartwell Manor, 315, 318  
 Chase, Stuart, 143  
 Chastity belt, 237  
 Chateau-Thierry, 48  
 Cheney, Mr., 19  
 Chester Springs, 7-8, 11, 15  
 Chicago, 6-7  
 Chichen-Itza, 202  
 Childs Restaurant, 30  
 China, 176, 197, 279  
 Chinese drawing, 340  
 — glass painting, 147  
 Chipingo frescoes, 85  
 Christ, 48, 132, 185, 372  
 Chrysler, Walter, 288  
 Cholula, 97  
 Christianity, 297  
 Christmas, 61-2, 132, 193  
*Christus Te Emmaus*, 42  
 Churchill, Winston, 315-17, 327  
 Cinderella, 18  
 Cirque d'Hiver, 46  
 Civil War, 217, 237, 326  
 Claridge's, 227  
 Clark, Rubin, 177  
 Clipper airplane, 410  
 Cleopatra, 381  
 Cleopatra's Needle, 294  
 Cocteau, 115  
 Colle, Pierre, 392, 408  
 Colman, Ronald, 312  
 Cologne Cathedral, 371, 376  
 Columbia University, 6, 295  
*Columbus*, 22-3  
 Columbus Day, 349  
 Common, 80  
 Communism, 103, 142, 156, 158, 211,  
     249, 255, 282, 302, 317, 360, 381,  
     400, 404  
 Communist League, 135  
 — Manifesto, 138  
 — Party, 166-7, 194, 197-9, 250, 328  
 — Youth, 92  
 Communists, 66, 85, 91-3, 95-6, 98-9,  
     106-7, 110-17, 119, 125, 127, 129,  
     139, 169, 198, 201, 237-8, 248, 302,  
     308, 366, 384  
 Compiègne, 410  
 Concha, 161-4, 177  
 Condor, 408  
 Coney Island, 103  
 Connecticut, 297  
 Cooper River, 218  
 Corbino, Jon, 9  
 Cordon, Gen., 349, 391  
 Corneille, 277  
 Corot, 259  
 Correa, Enrique, 158-60, 163, 167-8,  
     177, 384  
 —, Juan, 159  
 Cortes (Spanish Parliament), 336  
 Cortez, Palace of, 110, 161, 177  
 Cossacks, Mayor Walker's, 139  
 Cote d'Azur, 57  
 Courbet, 271  
 —, Mme., 271  
 Court of Fiestas, 101  
 — Labor, 101  
 Covarrubias, Miguel, 287  
 Coyoacan, 97, 158, 160, 189

- Cracow, 431  
 Cranach, 372  
*Creative Art*, 31  
 Croton, N. Y., 34, 75  
 Croton-on-Hudson, 34, 139, 144  
 Crowninshield, Mr., 131-2, 137, 141,  
   156, 166, 207-8, 210, 281, 287  
 —, Edward, 208  
 Crucifixions, 372  
 Cruger, Bertrand, 387  
 Crusades, 297  
 Cuauhtemoc, 161  
 Cuba, 20, 360  
 Cuernavaca, 103, 109-10, 194  
 Cuesta, Jorge, 90  
 Czechoslovakia, 10, 292, 311, 315,  
   320, 331, 335-7, 344  
 Czechs, 331, 334, 337  
  
 Daladier, 302, 309, 334, 344, 366, 411,  
   413, 429  
 Dali, Salvador, 244, 326  
 Dallett, John, 210-11, 216, 217-21,  
   225  
 —, Sr., 217, 232  
 —, Mrs., 217, 220-21, 226, 232, 234  
 Dante's *Inferno*, 400  
 Danzig, 409-10, 425, 427  
 Darcy, Françoise, 282, 300  
 —, Jacques, 282, 300  
 Darrah, Dr., 233-4  
 d'Aumale, Duc, 412  
 Daumier, 193  
 David, 43, 266  
*David*, 67  
 Davidson, Mr., 58  
 da Vinci, Leonardo, 42, 123  
 Davies, Marion, 20  
 Davis, Steuart, 46, 252  
 Day, Zohmah, 152, 164-5, 167-8,  
   177-8  
 de Cisneros, Hidalgo, 327, 391  
 Declaration of Independence, 134  
 Degas, 76, 398  
 De Gersdorff, Mr., 282  
 —, Mrs., 208, 210-11  
 Dehn, Adolph, 40-1  
 de Kerillis, Henri, 225  
 Delacroix, 282, 417  
 De la Huerta, 80  
 — Mora, Constanca, 327, 391  
 de Lisle, Roget, 301  
 — Llano, Gen. Guiepo, 420  
 Dell, Floyd, 75, 126, 143  
 —, Mrs. Bee Marie, 126, 143  
 —, Robert, 379  
 Del Vayo, Julio Alverase, 176, 337-9,  
   345, 350-1, 396  
 de Lyon, Corneille, 222, 265  
 — Monvel, 208  
 Delphic Society, 150  
 — Studios, 150, 153  
 de Madariaga, Salvador, 312  
 — Medici, Lorenzo, 79  
 De Negri, 106  
 Department of Health (Mexico), 106,  
   111  
 de Poitiers, Diane, 306  
 — Rivera, Miguel Primo, 332, 392  
 Deserto de los Leones, 190, 202  
 Dewey, John, 35  
 Diaz, 90, 161, 164, 184, 188  
 Dietrich, Marishka, 56, 62-3, 71-2, 74  
 —, Mr., 56, 62-3  
 Didkowski, 395, 399  
 Disarmament Conference, 197, 206  
 Divonne Les Bains, 309  
 Donatello, 67  
 Donovan, William J. (Wild Bill), 292  
 Dostoevski, 58, 72, 232  
 Dreiser, Theodore, 17, 153  
 Drucker, Rebecca, 140, 148, 155, 158,  
   166, 177, 211, 217  
 Duomo, 68-9  
 Durango, 198  
 Durant, Kenneth, 120, 124, 126, 133,  
   140, 145-6, 148, 178, 196-7, 201  
 —, Mrs., 124, 147, 149, 153  
 —, Mrs., Sr., 145-6  
 Durant's Island, 144-6  
 Dürer, Albrecht, 372  
 Dutch, 283-4, 300  
 Dynamic Symmetry, 150  
  
 East River, 21, 120  
 Eastman, Max, 15, 35, 50, 57-8, 60,  
   126, 142-3  
 —, Mrs. (Eliena), 34-5, 45, 126, 143  
 Eastmans, 34, 37, 45, 49, 57, 75, 104,  
   114  
 Ebro River, 324, 339, 343, 350-7, 363,  
   366, 376, 380, 383, 388, 391, 395  
 Edward, 10  
 Ecclesiastes, 261

- Eiffel Tower, 47  
 Eighteenth Amendment, 207  
 Eisenstein, Serge, 151-3, 169, 172-3, 208  
 El Dorado, 32  
 El Greco, 80, 190  
 Elizabeth, 174-5  
 Elizabeth, Queen, 313  
*El Machete*, 100, 116  
 El Paso, Tex., 78, 81  
*El Universal*, 198  
 Emilie, 277  
 Encisco, Jorge, 117  
 England, 79, 288, 312, 318, 355, 411, 414  
 English (people), 305, 337, 344, 409, 412, 414, 425, 428  
 Enter, Mary, 148  
 Epic Plan, 207  
 Escobar, Gen., 81, 197  
 — Rebellion, 80, 82  
 Escuela Mexico-España, 382  
*Eskimo of Montparnasse*, 54  
 Esther, 62  
 Estonia, 409  
 Ethiopia, 403  
 Eude, Loue-Marie, 287  
 "Evans, Robert," 196, 200  
 Eveline, 277  
 Exposition, France, 48, 263, 272-3, 280  
  
 Falange, 420  
 Falk, Dr., 285, 295  
 Falset, 357-8  
 Farel, 310  
 Farley, James A., 430  
 Fascism, 297  
 Fascisti, 66  
 Fascists, 238, 252, 255, 364, 384  
 Faure, Elie, 176-7, 331  
*Faust*, 49  
 Fernandel, 310  
 Fez, 422  
 Fiesole, 69  
 Fifth Avenue, 12, 18, 196, 293  
 Figueros, 323  
 Finland, 409  
 Finns, 360  
 Fireflies, 8  
 Fischer, Louis, 155-6  
 Fish Island, 73  
 Five-Year Plan, 136, 141  
 Flamenco music, 353  
 Florence, 29, 63-70, 371  
 "Flying Cloud," 218  
 Foerster, Albert, 427  
 Follett, Col., 312, 314  
 Fontainebleau, 300, 307  
 Forbes, Mrs. Alexander, 292  
*Foreign Affairs*, 399  
 Foreign Legion, 420  
 Fort Coullare, 402  
 Fortnum & Mason, 226  
 Forty-Niners, 5, 33  
 Foujita, 46  
 Fountaine, Mme., 267, 273  
 Fouquet, 264  
*Four Horsemen*, 60  
 Fra Angelica, 67, 180, 184  
 Fragonard, 43, 412  
 France, 38, 73, 79, 99, 165-6, 211, 262, 270, 279, 292, 301-2, 307, 309, 311-12, 318, 321-2, 337, 344, 366, 373, 376, 411-12, 415, 426, 429  
 Franco, Gen. Francisco, 279-80, 282, 288, 295, 297, 308, 313-14, 324, 331, 338, 339-40, 348, 351, 357, 376, 379, 384-5, 391, 393-6, 399, 404, 408, 411  
 —, Ramon, 154  
 Frank, Count d'Hanancourt Waldo, 100, 109  
 Frankl Galleries, 17-18, 27-8  
 —, Paul, 17-20, 23-27, 29, 76, 131, 134  
 —, Peter, 26  
 —, Mrs., 26  
 Franz Josef, 180  
 Fratellini Brothers, 46  
 Freddie, 227, 229, 236, 245  
 Freeman, Harry, 119  
 —, Mrs., 119  
 —, Joseph, 98, 100, 102-7, 111, 113-17, 119-37, 178, 189, 191, 196-201, 220, 231  
 —, Sr., 120-1, 132, 137  
 —, Mrs., 121, 132-3, 151  
 —, Marion, 121  
 —, Nat, 121  
 —, Selma, 121, 132-3  
 —, Sonia, 121, 128, 136

- French (people), 305, 326, 337, 360,  
     409, 413, 425, 428  
 French Alps, 50  
 French Legion of Honor, 298  
 French Morocco, 422  
 French Revolution, 47  
 Fulton Theatre, 379  
 Fusimana, 350-1, 354-5  
  
 Gachupines, 97  
 Galicia, 351, 360, 415  
 Galilee, 245  
 Gandhi, 153  
 Garber, Daniel, 8-9  
 Garcia, Jesus, 198  
 —, Señora, 188-9  
 Gare d'Este, 429, 435  
 — d'Orleans, 391  
 — du Nord, 38  
 Garibaldi, 362  
 Garibaldi, 364  
 Garrett, Mr., 289  
 Gas masks, 425  
 Gaston, L., 125  
 Gatchet, Dr., 271  
 Gathes, Johnnie, 353  
 Gauguin, Paul, 195  
 Gay Nineties, 150  
 Gdynia, 431  
 General Motors, 289  
 Geneva, 148, 196, 309-10, 324, 326  
 George, 4, 206, 225, 233  
 George VI, 408  
*Georgic*, 273  
 German-American League, 287  
 German Opera, 17  
 Germans, 307, 313, 315, 360-1, 366,  
     371-2, 384, 413, 428  
 Germany, 42, 56, 62-3, 79, 105, 166,  
     253, 263, 278, 287, 303, 305, 307,  
     319-20, 325-6, 333, 360, 367, 371,  
     373-4, 376, 379, 405, 408, 411,  
     428-9  
 Gerona, 323  
 Ghiberti, 67  
 Gibraltar, 317  
 Gide, André, 277  
 Gil, Portes, 111, 117  
 Giles, 272  
*Giorgiones*, 42  
 Giotto, 66, 77, 180, 184  
 —, Tower of, 69  
 Giovanni, Bellini, 372  
 God, 245  
 Godesbeig, 325  
 Goebbels, 409-10  
 Goering, Hermann, 368, 408  
 Gold, Michael, 124  
 Golden Lions, 189  
 Gomez, 105  
 Gonzalez y Gonzalez, Vicente, 180  
 Gonzalo, Major F. R. Escrig, 388  
 Goya, 190, 265  
 Grand Chaumière, 40, 44, 47  
 Grandesa, 348  
 Grand Gallery, 42  
 Giant's Tomb, 12  
 Grasse, 57  
 Grasshopper Palace, 190  
 Green Mansions, 144  
*Green Mansions*, 144  
 Greenwich, 219  
 — Village, 22, 27, 232  
 Greek sculpture, 77  
 Greuze, 412  
 Grey, David, 259  
 —, Mrs., 259, 261  
 Grigoriev, Boris, 54  
 Grijalbo, Juan, 350-1, 354  
 Grunewald, 372  
 Grynspan, Herschel, 371  
*Guernica*, 280  
*Guernica*, 280  
 Guggenheim Fellowship, 30, 150, 154  
     5, 160, 167  
 Guillotine, 41  
 Gumberg, Alex., 140-1  
  
 Haarlem, 270  
 Hague, The, 283  
 Haile Selassie, 425  
 Hale, Dorothy, 287, 292  
 Hals, Franz, 270  
 Hambridge, Mrs., 150  
 Hans, Col., 364  
 Harriman, Marie, 152-3, 202  
 Harlem, 153  
 Harrod's, 367  
 Hartford, Conn., 381  
 Harvard University, 297  
 Heine, Heinrich, 278  
 Hemingway, Ernest, 239, 296  
 Hidalgo, 169  
 Higgins, Lawrence, 387

- Hillsdale, N. Y., 210-11  
 Hindus, Maurice, 141  
 History of Art, 177  
 History of Mexico, 100  
 Hitler, Adolf, 278-9, 282, 287, 291,  
   314-15, 319, 325, 331, 333, 337,  
   339, 367-9, 379-80, 384, 405, 408-  
   11, 427, 429  
 Holbein, 372  
 Holland, 270, 283, 300, 310  
 Hollywood, 151, 153  
 Holy Communion, 204  
 Holy Trinity, 204  
*Homo Sapiens*, 412  
 Hoover, President, 77, 149, 206, 213,  
   240  
 Hopkins, Harry, 294  
 Hotel Champs-Élysées, 318, 366  
   — Condé, 412  
   — George V., 302  
   — Grand, 321, 395, 397  
   — Jacob, 38  
   — Julius Caesar, 45  
   — Majestic, 320, 324, 327, 332, 334,  
   340  
   — Niza, 65, 69  
   — Pennsylvania, 123  
   — Princess, 82  
   — Reforma, 384  
   — Regis, 159  
   — Ritz, 340, 346-8  
 House of Commons, 385, 414  
   — — Representatives, 380  
 Huarachas, 111, 183  
 Hudson River, 259  
*Humanité*, 343  
 Hyde Park, 259, 368  
  
 Ibárruri, Dolores, 329  
 Icy Glen, 208-9  
*Idols Behind Altars*, 167  
*Ile de France*, 29  
*Ile de la Cité*, 41  
*Impressions of South America*, 218  
 Ingram, Rex, 49, 60, 72  
   —, Mrs., 60  
 Ingres, 43, 222  
 Institute of Geographical Exploration,  
   297  
 Ione, 222  
 Insulin, 286  
 Ireland, 32  
  
 Italians, 360, 408  
 Italy, 11, 42, 44-5, 51, 61-70, 71, 79,  
   88, 255, 282, 288, 298, 305, 309,  
   320, 326, 340, 372, 405  
 Itzacihuatl, 204  
  
 Japan, 44, 279  
 Japanese, 197  
 Jenkins, Elizabeth, 387  
 Jersey City, 11  
 Jews, 302, 379-80  
*Jews Without Money*, 124  
*Journal of Delacroix*, 282  
 Juan, Prince, 314  
  
 Kahlo, Frieda, 92, 97, 103  
 Kaiser Friedrich Museum, 371  
 Kant, 352  
*Karamazov, The Brothers*, 59  
 Karlstein, 371  
 Katonice, 431  
 Keisler, Mr., 25  
 Kennedy, Ambassador, 311, 367, 380  
   —, Jos., Jr., 318, 408, 426  
 Kent, 315  
 Kent, Rockwell, 16, 27-8, 30-4, 150,  
   253, 281  
   —, Jr., 32  
   —, Mrs., 30  
 Keyes, Lady, 311, 313, 385  
   —, Sir Roger, 312-13  
 Kirriemuir, 225, 227  
 Kingstree, S. C., 31  
 Ritagawa, 187, 189  
 Knox, 310  
 Komroff, Manuel, 134  
 Kosciuszko, 382  
 Kostelanetz, André, 298  
 Kremlin, 113  
 Kroll, Leon, 45  
 Krylenko, 35  
 Kuniyoshi, 45  
 Kunz, 371  
 Kurfurstendamm, 375  
  
 La Belle Zélie, 222  
*Labor Defender, The*, 129  
 Labrador, 37  
 Lake Champlain, 33  
   — Geneva, 310  
 Langner, Lawrence, 17  
 Lanham, Edward, 281

- Latin Quarter, Paris, 38  
 Latvia, 409, 426  
 Laughton, Charles, 261  
*La Vanguardia*, 320  
 Lawrence, Gertrude, 20  
 League of Nations, 148, 310, 324, 348, 427  
 Leaning Tower, 64  
 L'Ecole des Femmes, 277  
*Le Figaro*, 413  
 Le Havre, 273, 430-33  
 Lehman, Harold, 262, 272  
 Lella Setta hills, 422  
 Le Main, Antoine, 265  
 — — Brothers, 265  
 — — Louis, 265  
 — — Mathieu, 265  
 Lenin, 113, 197  
*L'Epoque*, 225  
*Le Temps*, 413  
 Levi, Julian, 260-1  
 Lewis, Mrs. Dorothy Thompson, 153  
 —, John L., 350  
 —, Michael, 152  
 —, Sinclair, 152-3, 162  
*Life of Byron*, 130  
 Lillie, Beatrice, 20  
 Lima, Conference of, 379  
 Lindbergh, Col. Charles A., 315  
*L'Indifferent*, 413, 428  
 Lippincott Co., 149  
 Lister, Col., 360, 393-4  
*Little Minister, The*, 227  
*Little Street, The*, 284  
 Livingston, Robert, 259  
*Liza D.*, 222  
 London, 72, 165, 225, 289, 311, 318, 333, 366-7, 387, 408-9, 427  
 — *Daily Mail*, 312, 324-6, 336, 346  
 — *Times*, 311, 314, 349  
 Lola, 189  
 Lopez, Clotilde, 330, 362-3, 385, 390  
 —, Laura, 329, 336, 385, 390  
 Lorca, Garcia, 333  
 Lord & Taylor, 23  
 Los Angeles, Cal., 3, 5, 10, 60, 118, 191  
 — — Chamber of Commerce, 78  
 — — Grand Opera Assn., 80  
 — — Museum, 77, 79, 102, 107, 118-9  
 — — *Times*, 78  
 Los Remedios, 115  
 Louis XIV, 41  
 — XVI, 41  
 Louvre, 29, 40-3, 263, 271, 413, 428  
 Lozano, Manuel Roderiguez, 193  
 Lozowick, Louis, 127  
 Lucrat, Jean, 272  
 Lupe (landlady), 185  
 Lupe, 171-3  
 Luxembourg Gardens, 47, 222, 391  
 Luz, Blanca, 98, 195  
 Lyons, Eugene, 145  
 Lytell, Bert, 379  
 McMahon, Mrs. Audry, 256  
 McVity, Honoria, 259-60  
 —, Rex, 259-60  
 MacArthur, Gen., 206  
 Macbeth, Lady, 172  
 Madeleine, 41  
*Madonna and Child*, 264  
 Madrid, 272, 294-5, 331, 333, 361, 383, 385, 387, 391, 427  
 Maginot Line, 311, 429  
 Maenstrasse, 368  
 Maillol, Aristide, 398  
*Maison de la Culture*, 272  
 Majorca, 321  
 Makar, Mr., 111, 113  
 Malraux, André, 340  
 Manchester *Guardian*, 379  
 Manet, 266  
*Manhattan*, 435  
 Manship, Paul, 252  
 Manuel, 189  
 Marcantonio, Vito, 257, 381  
 Margareta, 87-8  
 Margit, 296, 301, 309, 311, 387, 391, 407-8, 411, 416, 419, 422, 426, 430  
 Maria, 182  
 Mariaches, 178  
 Marie, 243  
 Marie Antoinette, 45  
 Marin, Lupe, 88, 90, 93, 97, 108, 382  
 Marlborough, Duke of, 317  
 Marly le-Roi, 398  
 Marseilles, 410  
*Marseillaise, La* (picture), 272  
*Marseillaise* (song), 301  
 Martha Washington Hotel, 10-11  
 Martinez, 181-2, 185  
 Martinique, 46  
 Maruja, 408, 425-6, 428

- Marxism, 249  
 Mary, Virgin, 188, 304  
 Mary, 62, 154  
 Massey, Raymond, 379  
 Matisse, 211, 398, 418  
 Matson, Mr., 78  
 Maura, Antonio, 328  
 Maverick Festival, 17  
 Mayans, 202, 207  
 Mazzillo, Mario, 288  
 Mazzini, 364  
 Mediterranean Sea, 51, 282, 326, 396, 402, 415  
 Meirida, Carlos, 382  
 Mella, Julio, 85-6, 92  
 Mendez, Bianca, 20, 24, 26, 49  
 Mereada, Antonieta Rivas, 115  
 Merida, Carlos, 98  
*Merry Widow* waltz, 361  
 Metropolitan Museum, 12, 21, 270, 298  
 Mexican Agricultural School, 93  
   — Embassy, 342  
   — National Museum, 180  
   — National Palace, 87, 89, 92, 97, 101-2, 105, 110, 116, 160, 163-4, 166, 198-9  
   — Revolution, 103, 106-17, 164, 173, 181, 184, 193, 342, 360  
 Mexico, 69, 71-2, 75, 77, 80-91, 97-117, 124, 126, 153, 156, 169-70, 202, 204, 215, 236, 253, 277, 280, 294, 314, 348, 360, 382, 394, 420  
   — before the Conquest, 108  
 Mexico City, 78, 80-91, 111, 154, 158, 172, 174, 189, 309, 337, 382-5  
 Miaja, Gen., 387, 391-2, 396  
 Michelangelo, 66-7  
 Michoacan, 180, 382-3  
 Middle Ages, 237  
 Mieja, Gen., 349  
 Millay, Edna St. Vincent, 34, 57-8  
 Miller, Mr., 8  
   —, Mrs., 10  
 Ministry of the Air Force (Spain), 328  
   — — Education (Mexico), 78, 99, 101, 105, 187, 191  
   — — Fine Arts, 207, 291  
   — — Foreign Affairs (Spain), 118, 339  
   — — the Interior, 80  
   — — Justice (France), 225  
   — — Propaganda, 262, 327  
   — — War (Russia), 106  
 Minor, Robert, 133  
   —, Mrs. Lydia Gibson, 133, 139-40, 142-4  
 Mint Tower, 283  
 Moats, Mr., 102, 109, 117  
   —, Mrs., 102-3, 108-9  
 Modern art, 72, 74, 76, 208, 212  
   — Museum, 244  
   — photography, 24  
 Modesto, Col., 361  
 Modigliani, 98  
 Modotti, Tina, 84-5, 88, 93, 98, 102-3, 110, 125  
 Moe, Mr., 156  
 Molesworth, Gen., 349, 406  
 Moley, Raymond, 289  
 Mona Lisa, 42  
 Monasterio, Luis, 78, 191, 383  
 Monk, Liza, 290  
 Monnier, 394-5, 399-400, 412, 425  
 Monnikendam, 283  
 Mont Blanc, 309  
 Monte Carlo, 50, 57  
 Montecon, 428  
 Montezuma, 161, 181, 204  
 Montmartre, 47  
 Montreal, 37  
*Montrose*, 37-8, 74  
 Mooney, Tom, 199  
 Moore, Grace, 296, 298  
 Moors, 282  
 Mora, 350, 353, 357  
 Mora de Ebro, 350  
 Morelia, Mexico, 382-4  
 Morelos, 109  
 Morgan, 109  
   —, Mrs., 208  
 Moret, 306  
 Morlette, Señor, 79-81  
*Morro Castle*, 178  
 Morrow, Dwight W., 103, 109-12, 198  
   —, Mrs., 109  
 Moscow, 88, 106, 126, 136, 145, 155, 226  
 Moses, 48  
 Munich, 334, 340, 343, 355, 357, 366, 412, 429  
 Muray, Nickolas, 287  
 Murillo, 159, 189  
 Muro, Col., 398



- Mussolini, 66-8, 173, 320, 334, 340, 376, 411  
 Nacho, Tata, 100  
 Naples, 70  
 Napoleon, 385  
 Nast, Condé, 287-9, 292, 295-6, 387  
*Nation*, 201  
 National Academy, 8  
   — Preparatoria School, 100-1  
   — Socialism, 302-3, 317, 370, 404, 428  
 Nationalists, 96  
 Nattier, 43  
 Nazism, 297  
 Nebraska, 6  
 Negrin, Juan, 317, 324, 336, 348, 352, 357, 361, 363-4, 385, 387, 391, 393, 396-7, 408, 411, 416  
 Neptune, 68  
 Neutrality Act, 413  
 New England, 215, 241  
 Newfoundland, 38  
 New Italy, 66  
*New Masses*, 10, 127, 197, 201  
*New Republic*, 201  
*New Spain*, 204  
 New York, 8, 10-12, 17, 19, 21-2, 38, 47, 65, 76, 98-9, 118, 277, 301, 310, 320, 356, 387  
   — — Eye and Ear Hospital, 13  
   — — *Herald Tribune*, 152-3  
   — — *Times*, 220  
   — — *World*, 31  
 Nicaragua, 12  
 Nice, 49, 55, 59-61, 72, 74  
*Night Watch, The*, 283  
 Nike of Samothrace, 43  
 Nobel Prize, 152  
 Noguchi, 44, 290, 292  
 Nonette, 412  
 Non-Intervention Committee, 305  
*Normandie*, 296, 299, 311, 399  
 North Africa, 414, 425  
   — Pole, 57, 60  
   — Sea, 225, 414  
 Northern Lights, 226  
 Norway, 153, 355  
 Notre Dame, 40  
 Nuremberg, 56, 314  
 Oakland, Cal., 4  
 Oberle, Jean, 271, 301, 303  
 O'Brien, Esme, 290, 292  
 Obregon, 80  
   — (architect), 106  
 October Revolution, 106  
 Odessa, 331, 347  
 Oeschner, Dorothy, 368-9, 371, 374, 376  
   —, Frederick, 49, 144, 165, 367-8, 374, 376  
 Oflic, 318  
 O'Flaherty, Liam, 59, 71  
   —, Mrs., 59, 71  
 O'Higgins, Pablo, 98, 124, 176, 197  
 Old Mission, 11  
 Olympic Games, 253  
   — Stadium, 369  
 Omm-oh-lett, 38  
 Ona River, 324  
 Open-Air Art School, 118  
   — — School, 187  
 Oran, Algeria, 415-6  
*Orfeo*, 115  
*Oriente*, 195  
 Orozco, José Clemente, 101-2, 110, 150-1, 153-4, 253, 382  
 Ortiz, Gen., 125  
 Osorio-Tafall, Bibiano Fernandez, 351-2, 359, 361, 363-4, 387, 391-3, 411, 415-16, 420, 428-32  
 Otis Art Institute, 9, 73  
 Ovi, 38-9  
 Oyster Bay, 222  
 Pablo, 158-60  
 Pacheco, 98  
 Padilla, Senor, 78  
 Painters' Syndicate, 98, 100  
 "Painting and Politics," 197  
 Palace of Cortez, 110  
 Palazzo Vecchio, 66, 68  
 Palos Verdes, 207  
 Pan-American Exhibition, 16, 69, 79  
 Pangloss, Dr., 32  
 Paramount, 151  
 Partido Obrero Unificado Marxista, 348  
 Parera, Valentin, 296-7  
 Paris, 18, 21, 24, 30, 37-42, 44-6, 95, 98, 193, 222, 252, 263, 265-6, 271-2, 278, 280, 282, 300-3, 311, 318-19, 366, 371, 387, 399, 413-15, 422  
*Parlez moi d'amour*, 242

- Park of Chapultepec, 88  
 Pascin, Jules, 35, 45, 73  
*Paseo de Gracia*, 320  
*Paseo de Gracia* (street), 325, 334, 337  
 — del la Reforma, 111  
 Passionaria, 329, 336, 349  
 Patzcuaro, 186-7  
 Paul, Elliot, 295  
 Pawling, 216  
 Pedrara, La, 327  
 Pedregal, 161  
 Perelles, 388  
 Pennsylvania Academy, 4, 8, 41  
 — Railroad, 293  
 Pernod, 45  
 Perpignan, 321-2, 391, 394, 399,  
 402-4, 411  
 Pershing, Gen. John J., 290  
*Peter Pan*, 227  
 Philadelphia, 8, 10, 126, 146, 201, 242  
 — Academicians, 12  
 Philharmonic Concert, 30  
 Picasso, 197, 202, 280, 397  
 Pickford, Mary, 347  
*Pientes Siennois*, 180  
 Pilgrims, 190  
 Pilnyak, 155, 163  
 Pine Shadows, 258  
 Pisa, 64-5  
 Pittsfield, Mass., 212, 215  
 Place d'Armes, 44  
 — Montmartre, 318  
 — Vendome, 307  
 Plato, 84  
 Plattsburg, N. Y., 37  
 Plymouth Rock, 190  
 Poblet, Abbey of, 359-62, 434  
 Pogrom, 374  
 Poirer, Paul, 22  
 Poland, 166, 360, 413, 427, 431  
 Poles, 360-1, 382, 413, 429  
*Politica*, 359  
 Pompeii, 70-1  
 Pons, Lily, 298  
 Pont Neuf, 41  
 Popes, 77  
 Popocatepetl, 204  
 Popper, Martin, 257  
 Popular Front, 300-1, 306  
 Poirer, 413  
 Portland, Ore., 3  
 Port Vendres, 402, 415  
 — Washington, 410  
 Posada, Guadalupe, 193  
 Poussin, 42  
 Prague, 311, 371  
 Prat de Llobregat, 348  
 Pratt, Lieut., 395, 397-9  
 Prieto, Indelico, 384-5  
*Pravda*, 327, 335  
 Proust, Marcel, 104, 123  
 Puebla, 173, 198  
 Puerto, Felipe Carrillo, 151  
 Pugibet, Mr., 169, 186, 189, 193,  
 203-5, 247, 385  
 Pujol, Antonio, 191, 247-8, 262, 341-3,  
 350, 366  
 Pulitzer, Ralph, 31  
 Pulque Hacienda, 169-70  
 Puritans, 214-5  
 Pushkin, 72  
 Pyrenees, 303, 322, 387, 397, 405,  
 411, 416  
  
*Queen Mary*, 311, 376, 385, 404  
*Queen Mary*, 408  
 Queretaro, 82, 158  
 Quetzalcoatl, 204  
 Quintanilla, Luis, 287, 294-6, 304,  
 308-9, 321-4, 327, 337, 343  
  
 Radio City, 263  
 Ralph, 260  
 Rambla de los Flores, 325  
 Rambova, Natacha, 20  
*Rancho Grande*, 171  
 Reds, 86-7, 119, 366, 427  
 Red Square, 88  
 Reed, Alma, 150-1, 153  
 —, Mrs., 132-3  
 — Club, John, 200  
 Reformation, 270, 372  
 Rembrandt, 42, 261, 283, 307  
*Rembrandt*, 257, 261  
 Renaissance, 65, 68, 76, 101, 117  
 —, American, 250, 252  
 —, Italian, 68, 190  
 Renoir, 62, 76, 260, 398  
 —, Jean, 272  
 Republicanism, 302  
 Revolution, French, 301  
 —, Mexican, 103, 106-17, 164, 173,  
 181, 184, 193, 342, 360  
 —, Russian, 129, 134, 136, 146

- Revolution, World, 96, 99, 200, 237  
 Revolutionary War, 33, 382  
 Revueltas, 98, 106  
 Rhine River, 410  
 Ribera, 190  
 Rice, Dr. Alexander Hamilton, 297  
 Richardson, Dr., 243  
 Riggs, Alice, 212, 215, 218-9  
 —, Dr., 211-4, 216, 241-2  
 —, Mrs., 212-14, 241  
 "Rimirez," Julio, 125  
 Rinehart, Mary, 292  
 Ringling Brothers Circus, 259  
 Rivera, Diego, 69, 75, 78-80, 82-96,  
     97-117, 151, 154, 166, 197-202,  
     371, 382  
 —, Chato, 91  
 —, Frieda, 108, 112, 167  
 —, Pico, 91  
 Riverside Drive, 12  
 Robeson, Paul, 17, 302  
 Robinsons, 57  
 Rockefeller, 101  
 — Institute, 18  
 Rockettes, 263  
 Rojo, Gen., 349  
 Rolland, Romain, 272  
 Romanoff, Prince, 150  
 Romans, 50  
 Rome, 98, 385  
 Rome-Berlin Axis, 408  
 Romley, Rita, 134  
 Roosevelt, F. D., 213, 220-1, 237, 240,  
     279, 289, 291, 307, 331, 350, 412  
 —, Mrs., 259  
 —, Theodore, 179  
 Rosa Luxemburg, 328  
 Rossi, 63  
 —, Dr., 165, 168  
 —, Luigi, 66-70  
 —, Maria, 66-8, 70  
 —, Signor, 66, 69-70  
 —, Signora, 65-6, 70  
 Rothchild, Mrs., 15-19  
 Rotterdam, 410  
 Rouen Cathedral, 431  
 Rousseau, Henri, 193  
 Rue de la Paix, 42  
 — de l'Eglise, 61  
 — Jacob, 45  
 — National, 268  
 Ruellan, Andrée, 30, 40, 43-4, 56  
 Rumanians, 360  
 Russia, 30, 35, 58, 63, 72, 128, 140-2,  
     166, 279, 291, 302-3, 308, 318, 326,  
     328, 355, 360  
 Russian Count, 8-9  
 — Revolution, 74  
 Russians, 170, 265, 281, 298, 308,  
     315, 317, 326, 340, 344, 347, 355,  
     394, 409, 426, 428  
 Sacco, 16  
 Sacré Coeur, 47, 319  
 Sacramento, Cal., 5  
 Saenz, Dr. Moises, 175  
 Saint Cyprien, 388  
 — Germain, 304  
 — Lawrence River, 37  
 — Luke's Hospital, 132  
 — Paul, France, 53  
 — Petersburg, 72  
 Sakharov, Don Julio, 170  
 Salem, 143  
 Salt Lake City, 177  
 Samois, France, 263-73, 279, 286, 306  
 Samoreau, 300, 306, 308, 311, 366  
 San Angel, 193  
 — Carlos Academy, 202, 248  
 — Cucufá, 336  
 — Fernando Valley, 419  
 — Francisco, 151, 238  
 — — Fair, 307  
 — Geronimo, 203, 205  
 — Pedro, 72  
 Sanchez-Ventura, 301, 303-5, 391-4,  
     225-7  
 Sancho, 321  
 Sandino, 12  
 Sand's Point, 288  
 Sandwyck, 284, 302  
 Santa Christina, 347  
 — Claus, 61  
 — Monica, 246  
 — Teresa, 304  
 Santiago, 185  
 Sarasota, Fla., 258  
 Sargent, John Singer, 214  
 Saturday Evening Post, 408  
 Schlee, George, 298  
 Schmidt, Katherine, 45  
 School of Bohemia, 371  
 Scotland, 222, 310-11  
 Scots, 360

- Scottsboro Case, 140  
 Seine River, 41, 263, 268, 272, 279, 306  
 Sender, Mr., 129  
 Senlis, 410, 426  
 Séqueiros, David, 98, 100, 102, 125, 191, 195, 247-50, 258, 262, 341  
 Servicio de Emigracion para Republicanos, 393  
 Seville, 420, 423  
 Sherwood, Robert, 379  
*Siania*, 405  
*Sibony*, 196  
 Siegfried, Andre, 216  
 Sierra de Prades, 359  
   — Madre Mountains, 5  
 Silver Shirts, 240  
 Simon, Sir John, 309  
 Simpson, Eyler, 160  
 Sinclair, Upton, 143, 207  
   —, Mrs., 169, 173, 207  
 Singermann, 84  
*Social Register*, 140  
 Socialism, 302  
 Socialist Party, 143  
 Sorbonne, 300, 359  
 Soto, Roberto, 115  
 Soubirous, Bernadette, 385  
 South America, 216, 344-5, 406, 420  
   — Mulberry Plantation, S. C., 217, 219  
 Soviet government, 72, 99  
   — Russia, 35, 106, 117, 173, 263, 308, 315  
   — Union, 128, 198  
 Spaghetti, 70  
 Spahi, 46  
 Spain, 79, 97, 100, 154, 176, 218, 255, 261, 279-80, 287-8, 290-2, 296-8, 301-4, 307, 311, 313, 316-18, 320-2, 333, 335, 343-5, 347-8, 351, 358-65, 376-9, 382, 405, 408-9, 422, 434  
 Spakenburg, 283  
 Spanish language, 90, 104  
   — Nationalist Relief Committee, 297  
   — people, 97, 181  
   — Republic, 288, 290-1, 296  
*Sports Palast*, 331  
 Stalin, 409  
 Steichen, Mr., 24  
 Stendahl, Mr., 78  
   — Art Galleries, 78  
 Stockbridge, Mass., 206-14, 241  
 Storm Troopers, 374  
 Stout, Rex, 16  
 Sudeten, 314, 333, 339, 367  
 Suner, Serrano, 420  
 Sunset Boulevard, 25  
 Sussoni, 419-21  
*Swann's Way*, 104, 123  
*Sweet Mystery of Life*, 196  
 Switzerland, 310  
 Tacho, 158-60  
 Tagore, 181  
 Tamayo, 90, 98  
 Tarasean Indians, 180  
 Tarragona, 358, 388  
 Tass, 98, 115, 119, 124-6, 145, 178  
 Taxco, 191, 195  
 Taxes, 207  
 Tejeda, Col., 342-3, 362  
 Telemcen, 422-3  
 Tenochtitlan, 204  
 Terguena, 355-6  
 Terry, Alice, 60  
   —, Dr., 278, 281, 285-6  
 Tetlapayac, 169-70  
 Thames River, 318  
 Theatre Guild, 17  
 Theodorich, 371  
 Thermidor, 198  
*These Waiting Hills*, 246  
 Third class, 37, 64  
   — Reich, 373  
   — Republic, 302  
 Thompson, Mrs., 54  
 Tibidabo, 334, 336, 363  
 Times Square, 135  
 Tin, 180  
 Tisse, 153, 172, 207  
 Tlalpam, 187, 277  
 Togoland, 369  
 Toledano, Vicente Lombardo, 100, 190-1  
 Toller, Ernst, 376, 380, 385, 404  
 Tolstoi, 72  
 Toltecs, 202, 207  
 Tombs (prison), 129  
 Toscanini, 32  
 Toussaint, 402  
 Tower of Giotto, 69  
*Town and Country*, 287  
 Town Hall, 252  
*Tree of Life*, 371

- Tres Caminos, 194  
 Tresca, Carlo, 16  
 Trocadéro, 47, 264, 429  
 Trotsky, Leon, 35, 88, 104, 114, 117,  
     141-2, 194, 198  
 Trotskyites, 348  
 Trouville, 430-2  
 Tuileries, 41, 222, 303  
 Tushca, 164  
 Twentieth Century pastels, 25  
 Tzintzuntzan, 186
- Uffizi, 29, 67  
 Ulysses, 115  
 Undine, 320  
 Union Square, 11, 129  
 University of Cambridge, 359  
   — Madrid, 359, 395  
   — Mexico, 175, 382  
   — Sargossa, 304  
 Unter den Linden, 373, 375  
 Upton, Miss., 79, 107, 119  
 Uruapan, 180-6  
 Utrecht, 283, 302
- Valentina, 298  
 Valentino, Rudolph, 98, 144  
 Van Boetzaler, Baron, 284-5  
   —, Baroness, 285  
   —, Baroness Ocky, 270-1, 273, 283,  
     285, 300, 303, 306-11, 366  
 Van Gogh, 54, 214, 244, 252, 270-1,  
     284  
   —, Theo, 271  
*Vanity Fair*, 130, 208  
 Vanzetti, 16  
 Vasconcelos, Carmen, 81-4  
   —, José, 81-4  
   —, Señor, 82-4, 100, 115  
 Vasouis, 385  
 Velasquez, 190  
 Venezuela, 104-5  
 Ventura, Sanchez, 302, 408-9  
 Venus de Milo, 43  
 Vera Cruz, 165, 178-9, 394, 403  
 Vermeer, 284-5  
 Versailles, 44-5  
 Vesuvius, 70  
 Via Diagonal, 334, 362  
 Vienna, 371  
 Viguri, Ramon, 395-6, 399-400
- Villa, Pancho, 93, 163  
 Villaseñor, Mr., 165, 168  
 Villefranche, 60, 73  
 Vinaros, 288  
 Vincent, 214  
 Vionnet, 102  
 Virgin of Guadalupe, 194  
 Vistula River, 409  
 Viva il Ducl, 68  
*Vogue*, 103, 208, 210, 287-8, 292, 308  
   — (London), 387  
   — (Paris), 393  
*Voices of October*, 128  
 Volendam, 283  
 Vollard, Ambroise, 417  
 Voltaire, 32, 80  
 Von Hindenburg, Field Marshal, 284  
 Von Rath, 371, 374  
 Vysekai, Mr., 9
- Waikiki, 81  
 Wall Street, 140  
 Warsaw, 430, 433  
 Washington, D. C., 124, 206, 220,  
     291, 310, 380, 399  
 Washington, George, 8, 196  
 Watteau, 265-6, 272, 413, 428  
 Weber, Max, 253  
 Welfare Island, 139, 255  
 Welles, Orson, 379  
 Wells Fargo, 103  
 Wells, H. G., 412  
 Westminster Abbey, 318  
 Weston, Edward, 84-5  
 Wethersfield, Conn., 381  
 Weyhe Galleries, 76  
 White House, 289  
 Whitney's, Mrs., Island, 144  
 Wilhelm, 371  
 William the First, 370  
 Wilson, Hugh, 374  
   —, Woodrow, 290, 307  
*Window in Thrums*, 227  
 Windsor, Conn., 381  
 Wingéd Victory, 43  
*Wisconsin*, 331, 347, 433  
 Woodstock, 15-16, 235-6  
 Workers and Peasants Bloc, 197  
 World Revolution, 96, 99, 200, 237  
 World War I, 237, 281, 313, 332, 373,  
     405, 408, 411  
   — II, 252, 282, 291

W.P.A., 369, 381  
Wright, Frank Lloyd, 25  
Wurmser, Nicolaus, 371

Xochimilco, 159

Yaque, Gen., 420

## INDEX

451

Yucatan, 151

Zapata, 94, 197, 360

Zeitlin, Mr., 78

Zocalo, 159

Zoie, 16

Zurbaran, 202